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SERMONS

ON SEVERAL

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

By THOMAS JANES.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

AS I have ventured to offer these discourses to the notice of the public, I think myself obliged to acquaint them with my motives and reasons for so doing. I declare, neither ambition or avarice could excite me to any thing of this kind ;—I am not actuated by the former, as I am sensible of my inability to excel, and I hope the latter will never find place in my heart. I shall not scruple to acknowledge, that I have thus exposed myself to gratify the desire of many worthy persons: this however will be no screen from the censures which I expect, and perhaps deserve. I am very willing to pay this customary tribute, if the plain truths which these discourses contain produce a change of heart in those who read them.—I confess I am not without hope in this case,

as

The P R E F A C E.

as GOD was pleased to bless them in a very remarkable manner when they were delivered from the pulpit. The subjects are such as are intended to expose the danger and folly of sin; and to induce men to love and practice the holy religion of JESUS; the leading principles of which, I have endeavoured to lay down in the most intelligible manner; so that I hope some heart will be impressed with the truth of them, and effectually reclaimed from the unmanly and unchristian practice of every species of iniquity. In short, the design of this publication is not to make men wiser, so much as it is intended to make them better.—If this end is answered, I shall gladly sacrifice my reputation to the resentment of wrong headed zealots, and the puerile remarks of narrow minded criticks.

S E R M O N I.

JOB xiv. 1.

MAN THAT IS BORN OF A WOMAN IS
OF FEW DAYS AND FULL OF TROUBLE.

HOW greatly our lives and actions contradict this grand truth—the *brevity* of life! If the sacred text was deeply imprinted in our minds, and sensibly felt in our hearts, surely it would oblige us to quit the vanities of time, and urge us to pursue with utmost ardor and diligence those things that make for our everlasting peace;—but man, that is born of a woman, too conceited to be admonished, too self-willed to be detained in the paths of wisdom, makes but little improvement at the best of the *short* space which he is allowed for the attainment of that state of future tranquility and inexhausted delight, where his day shall never end, and where trouble shall never more assail him.

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MAN

MAN that is born of a woman, prone to do evil as the sparks fly upward, too devoid of consideration—by his irregularities greatly impairs, if, not shortens, his days which are but *few*, and multiplies his troubles which are *many*.—Alas!—if our days are *few*, and the *few uncertain*, how highly does it behove us in the present moment to cry earnestly to our God, that he may preserve us from the miseries of the ungodly, and by the interposition of his providence rescue us from eternal trouble!

BUT to descend to some particulars, it will be needful to consider the *uncertainty* and *brevity* of life, and a few of the troubles that are ever annexed to it.—And then expose the *madness* and *folly* of those who neglect to improve this uncertain life.

As to the *brevity*, and *uncertainty* of life. What man that lives can assure himself of the coming moment?—While the impious assurance is growing in his haughty mind the barbed arrows of relentless death may lodge deeply in his guilty heart, and transfix his fleeting soul!—What tho' our insolence carries us to the utmost limits of presumption, and tho' we smart not for our daring actions,
does

does it prove any ability in us to save ourselves—any power to resist his frown whose hand contains the issues of life and death?—By no means—nor can the strongest cordage of the human heart preserve it from the fatal blow of DEATH's keen scythe. When he attacks it, with his ample stroke, the yielding breast must open a passage to the trembling heart, and then the crimson streams flowing from the wounded spring besmear the ruffian's blade!—Then, man that is born of a woman returns to his original, moulders into dust.

WHEN man first issues from the teeming womb of her who gave him birth, like the infant-bud—he is too tender to sustain the rough visits of the northern blast; and as the early blossom of some fair tree withers by the baleful effect, so the young visitant takes a hasty farewell summoned hence by some sharp disease. Nor are those who are farther advanced in the season of life more secure than the early blossom; tho' the fruit looks fair, and affords us hopes of a delicious banquet, our high expectations are often destroyed by some unsuspected caterpillar latent beneath the leaf,—or as some small worm lodged in the centre of the fruit imperceptibly works its decay, so the youth, in whom the parents

lives are bound, comely in his person, amiable in his deportment, carrying in his aspect the promise of longevity, may have some emissary of death working his quick decay.—Instances are not wanting to prove the mournful truth. Nor are the robust, the spirited and gay more secure from the grand destroyer.

THE strong, like SAMSON often pull the mighty fabric on themselves and perish in the ruins.—How often is the lofty pine by some sudden tempest levelled with the ground and robbed of all its pristine honor?—The cedar, which waves its tall head in regal grandeur, by some conflicting ethereal blaze instantaneously withers, and in obedience to its executioner bends in ruin its blasted head.—The stubborn oak, too superb to bend to the gentle breeze like the humble osier, must yield when the artillery of the boisterous north rages in the howling tempest, and spreads desolation where it wings its way.

IF we follow these similitudes closely into the world of man's nature, we shall often find, the pine,—the *genteel, gay* youth yielding to the arms of nature's grand DESPOILER; who considers neither superiority of birth, riches or abilities;—nothing can prevail on relentless DEATH to suspend the fatal blow. The
cedar

cedar tho' in itself potent to destroy the injurious reptile, must also yield to a superior power:—so many who *lord* it haughtily over their inferiors and carry their brow aloft, secure in themselves, yet those from the hands of impartial DEATH meet equal treatment with the menial slave; and midst their grandeur are obliged to obey the dreadful mandate, lay their opulence and fame in the dust, and *yield* submissive victims to the KING OF TERRORS. The oak,—the *stubborn* and *inflexible*, neither thankful for mercies or terrified at judgments, *such* too must yield, and tho' awhile they stoutly resist, the stronger whirlwind plucks them by their root and hurls them distant from their late abode.—Thus the great, the demi-gods of nature, unaffected in their hearts by disease, nor reformed in their manners by conviction, are at last of necessity compelled to yield to one common fate.

BUT if the days of man are *few* with the *juvenile* and vigorous; the *old* and feeble need not to be informed that their's are *fewer*. That they are advanced to the winter of life, their *withered* limbs, their *hoary* heads, their *animal* decay, those MASTER PREACHERS, if duly attended to, would sufficiently inform them,

and excuse me. When we survey mankind what numbers of infants shall we find at the mature age of threescore?—Deplorable reflection—unhappy truth!—What, will not the vicissitudes of life—the alarms of Providence—the sensible decay of nature remind them of the *shortness* of their date? One would imagine that old persons from each other would derive such information of their decrepit conditions as persons have a display of their features in a looking-glass.—But *age*, which should be their glory, in the estimation of too many is a mark of derision, a name of reproach.—Under this unhappy consideration, in the evening of life, such numbers of our *old* boys embark, like children in their play, upon a single plank into the ocean of hurry, the sea of destruction. Nothing can be more *ridiculous*, so highly *despicable*, and at the same time more truly *pitiable* than a GREY HEADED LIBERTINE. If the character with its effects only concerned *themselves* 'twere very deplorable, but when we consider the mischief it occasions among the younger part of society, it makes reflective nature shudder. Persons who, from their age and experience, are so loudly called upon by reason and the *Christian* religion, to train up in virtue, and instruct in the gospel faith, the youth

youth they sacrifice to hell, at once renders such aged infernals odious to our thoughts, and almost hateful to our sight.

O ye AGED ! If the least regard for piety and holy actions yet survives within your bosoms, exercise your authority to the suppression of vice and the promotion of the religion of the holy JESUS ; so on a dying pillow conscience will be disarmed of its sting, and the stroke of death be welcome to your souls.— On the other hand, the aged contemptible who hath devoted his all to debauchery and obscenity, at such a crisis must tremble at the thoughts of dissolution ; and conscious of having ruined himself by illegal actions, and others by his base example, be forced to meet the *terror of impenitents* in that terrific dress he so often burlesqued. Alas ! how terrible must it be, to spend our *few days* to so *bad* a purpose ! The misery which swells their bosoms and distorts their hearts on a dying bed, is but a prelude, a faint presage of that misery to which they hasten. Let none presume to value themselves on account of their *age*, or *knowledge*, if unacquainted with the religion of JESUS.—If our wisdom extends to nothing farther than earthly science, we are very *fools*, and that because we have not made it our business

liness to secure *that* which will extend our happiness *beyond* the grave.

“ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble,” from the cradle to the tomb ;—disease and disappointments make up the grand inventory of human life. In our education oftentimes much pain is bestowed, and much trouble felt ; in our pleasures generally great fatigue :—in our employments anxiety, uneasiness, losses, disesteem, and many more sad offsprings from the loins of meager trouble which here would be too tedious to enumerate.—But the various troubles to which we are all subject can never be recited. Misfortunes, as they are called, (an innumerable train !) fail not daily to fulfil my text. The loss of valuable friends is a trouble that may stand foremost in the list.—The want of the common conveniencies of life is another, not to be numbered among the minute.—The ravages of fire despoil us of our goods, and lay our habitations desolate.—The tumultuous ocean ruins us by shipwreck,—or by hostile invasions on our houses and lands.—The loss of reputation.—The being deprived of our intended pleasure.—Nay oftentimes the very enjoyment of it proves troublesome, and is a loud confirmation of my text. / Disease of mind robs us of refreshment and deprives

us of comfort.—Disease of body confines us counter to our desire, and wounds our will. These are taxes of the heaviest kind, as all things at such a juncture unanimously seem to augment our trouble. From this short review we must stand convinced, that “ Man who is born of a woman is of *few* days and full of *trouble*.”

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

JOB xiv. 1.

MAN THAT IS BORN OF A WOMAN IS
OF FEW DAYS AND FULL OF TROUBLE.

WE are now to expose the *folly* and *madness* of those who neglect to improve this short uncertain life.

As nothing can equal the soul in value, the soul should be preferred before every thing. The soul in short is that *only* which is properly ourselves; he therefore, who neglects the care of his soul neglects himself. How greatly must that man be infatuated who sacrifices his eternal interest to the fleeting vanities of this precarious world.—Who, by his conduct, informs his observers that heaven and its SOVEREIGN are in his estimation of *no* regard?

BUT to place his absurdity in a more striking light. His case is similar to a condemned

demned criminal who, might obtain a pardon if he would acknowledge his crime with promises of amendment, and implore the mercy of his prince ;—but obstinately persists to justify his conduct, and prefers an ignominious death before a necessary submission.— This is the portrait of a sinner whose attention has never been directed to the interest of his soul. Born in *sin* and inured to the practice of it, he has exposed himself to the vengeance of heaven, and the gathering storm is about to execute the dreadful threatening on his devoted head. His merciful REDEEMER interposes and by the *whispers* of his grace admonishes him to repent,—i. e. to *confess* and *forfake* his sin; and to cry to GOD for mercy in HIS prevailing name. But rejecting the offer and continuing in sin, GOD withdraws his forbearance, and commissions the executioner to dispatch his soul.

LET us attend to the case of a man who had contracted larger debts than he had in his power to discharge, and by that means was liable to be thrown into prison ;—yet thro' the kindness of his creditors, he obtains a certain time to raise a sufficient sum for the payment of those debts ; and that upon neglect of payment at the *appointed* time he must spend
his

his future days in jail. Should we not reasonably expect to see him doubly industrious, rising early and going late to rest?—But, if we saw the same man loitering up and down the streets, and busying himself with children in their sports instead of endeavouring to raise the money and keep himself out of prison;—should we not say he is a *madman* or a *fool*?

WHAT must we say of him then, who is an *infinite* debtor to the *law* of GOD, but thro' HIS indulgence is permitted for a season (to him how *uncertain*!) to “work out his salvation with fear and trembling,” and yet day after day neglecting this important business—risking his *eternal all* for a momentary gratification,—and by refusing to follow Jesus sealing his own *damnation*!

THIS *unhappy* character is the characteristic of thousands; who being regardless of death are not solicitous to prepare for it, consequently when stretched upon their last bed, depart either *totally insensible—despairing—or distracted!*

LET us now attend the death-bed of one whose heart has never had that change passed
B upon

upon it which CHRIST described to NICODEMUS. Not yet apprehensive of a speedy change he contents himself with observing that his life, tho' not altogether conformable to the requirements of GOD's word, has not been one of the worst—that he was chiefly employed in enjoying the innocent pleasures of life—or industriously endeavouring to acquire a fortune; and from these considerations doubts not but all will be well with him—or GOD have mercy on thousands!—But now behold him as the KING of TERRORS advances nearer!—The curtain drawn aside—ETERNITY *opening* upon him—Perceiving himself upon the *breaking* borders of time—Tottering over an *unknown* world—No heavenly conductor near—No Sun of Righteousness to illumine the *dark valley*—His disordered soul, by every hope *forsaken*, would fain fly back nor try the dread abyfs! Unknowing who surrounds him, inarticulately he attempts an exercise he never practised in the time of health.—But, DEATH presenting his summons full to view interrupts his unavailing petition; and giving him the fatal blow, hurries him headlong to the other world! Alas! What did the *world* or *pleasure* avail this unhappy votary!—Why did they withdraw their assistance at this needful juncture

junction from so faithful an ally?—Why did they not repel the tyrant's blows, or send him hence with *recommendatory* letters to his injured judge?—That this is not a picture of imagination I attest. O FATHER of mercies! May no poor sinner ever come into so dreadful a *secret*!

If such an instance should be given as a warning to many, with what contempt would they treat it, how would they charge their monitor with uncharitableness and unchristian rigour: and angrily demand who could inform him what reception the soul met with in the world of spirits? To such persons we have only to return—we do not pretend to say; But that *such* a life and *such* a death afford great room to fear what prudence forbids us to declare.

THOSE charitable objectors would do well to ask themselves what reception they shall meet with, if they die in the same condition which they live, i. e. “without GOD in the world.” They must remember that there is but *one* way of being reconciled to GOD, viz. the way in which the Colossians were reconciled.—“Being presented by CHRIST JESUS, holy, unblamable, and unreprouable

in the sight of GOD."—They must remember also, that before they can be *thus* presented they must be *in* CHRIST, i. e. "New creatures." "Old things must pass away and all things become new."—If this *is* their case they have that "repentance not to be repented of;" and enjoy the faith of the gospel, having the witness *in* themselves. Which *faith* justifies them, and gives them peace with GOD thro' our LORD JESUS CHRIST.—Being now born again, or having "put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness, they have put away lying, and speak the truth to their neighbour." If these objectors have *none* of these evidences they have just reason to tremble, for they are none of CHRIST's. They must remember, that the hour cometh when it will be too late, perhaps, to seek after the favor of JESUS.—"When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord."

How

How mad and foolish is that man who, turns the deaf ear to the reproofs of the gospel and the admonitions of his friends ;—vainly attempting to apologize for the bad conduct of others, he *insensibly* countenances his own sins, and confirms himself at last in a *vain* opinion of their innocence, and the safety of his soul. Such must know, “ That to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey.”

If these things are so, what a condition is the poor *unthinking mistaken* world in!—Living prayerless, impenitent, unbelieving, unholy lives ; contenting themselves, that a few days or hours before their dissolution they shall send for a minister to make their *peace* with GOD, and all will be well.—Two things are to be observed here ;—one is, it is very uncertain whether they will be favored with a lingering illness or not ;—’tis probable death will call them off *without* a warning. The other is,—peace is not so *easily* made with GOD as men usually suppose. When men have put off these great matters time after time, when they come to *die*, they have no *inclination* to think of them—or they *flatter* themselves with hopes of a recovery, and so *postpone* them—or they are deeply engaged

in *settling* their worldly matters. Thus the poor soul, which ought to have had their *first* and *last* regard, goes from time to eternity with *total neglect*.—Oh Sirs, What madness can equal *this*!

If we were but as *earnest* for the things of eternity as we are *cautious* in those of the present life, how happy would it be for us! If men have any thing of value in their houses or send off a ship richly laden, they seldom fail to insure them, and that sometimes at a high rate; then they are contented, and care very little what happens either to their houses or ships. Would to GOD we were all wise to insure for eternity!—This may be done without money or price. Who then but a madman or a fool will live in such *hazard* and uncertainty? If men discover uneasiness when a fire breaks out in a distant part of the town which is not likely to reach them, and which if it did, would only destroy a little old furniture,—how much more does it behove every considerate mind, that is not interested in JESUS, to be uneasy, seeing that the shafts of DEATH are flying *thick* around him, that he may fall the next victim to his resistless power and be undone for ever. In short there is no term of reproach that I know
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of sufficiently strong to brand those persons with, who live without a *daily* preparation for another life. Here we have at the longest but a very short time to stay.—There we must abide for ever.

RECOLLECT ye worldings, the condition of that unhappy man mentioned in the gospel.—Who having acquired great wealth determined to fatigue himself no more with the cares and toils of business; and enraptured with the prospect of succeeding years of pleasure, broke into that elated soliloquy—"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease—eat, drink and be merry."—But GOD said unto him. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"—Can you conceive the disorders of his heart at this alarming upbraiding.—Or describe his appearance before his neglected judge? What did all his riches avail him—it could no more repel the arrows of death than the fortune and grandeur of that certain *rich* man could exempt him from the torments of hell!

The most unthinking.—Those who are most passionately fond of the false grandeur—decit-
ful

ful riches, and delusive pleasures of life ;—if they ever suffer themselves to think, cannot but know that he *only* will be happy hereafter, who in *this* life used all diligence to make his calling and election sure. Why then will men be at so great pains to defend a life of folly and irreligion, and make such childish objections against the improvement of an *uncertain* life ? When religion is pressed upon them, how readily will they return—Can we be always upon our knees—for ever reading—always thinking upon death and such gloomy subjects ?—You would drive us mad or make us stupid. Such objections are the certain proofs of an *ignorant bad* heart :—therefore they deserve some consideration.

PRAYER—(which is audience given by GOD to a poor sinner—an intercourse with the MAJESTY of heaven and our hearts, and for that reason the most *honorable*, and the most *interesting* of all employments,) is looked upon as mere drudgery by those who approach GOD with their lips “ while their hearts are far from him.” They no sooner begin the unwilling service than they wish it ended—therefore they reap no advantages from it. But for a moment let it be supposed that prayer is nothing more than a certain
painful

painful posture of body, and a mere service of the lip;—how can those very persons expect the Divine countenance in their dying moments, who have neglected to pay him *this* kind of homage. Again—considering ourselves to be what we indeed are, finners under the wrath and curse of GOD here, and exposed to his vengeance for ever hereafter, what pains can be too great to be taken in such a condition to avert the sentence, and finally to be admitted into his heavenly kingdom?

WHEN sentence of death is passed upon a criminal how earnestly will he intercede with the judge for his life—tho' stern justice tells him 'tis in vain. Yet finners who are invited by GOD himself, our *coming* Judge, to apply to him for mercy (not for a reprieve, for a few years, or from a different mode of dying;—but *exemption* from the bitter pains of everlasting death;) will not yield, and imprudently dare to call his gentle terms hard!

MEN very liberally throw out epithets of reproach upon those who neglect to improve themselves in the study of such books as will enable them to understand some science which
will

will not, *cannot*, profit them beyond the present life. What then must the Author of that book which contains the words of eternal life,—that infallible directory to a *better* world, what will he say to those who scorn its instructions.—Alas! how fond is man of ruin, how does he court destruction by presumptuous negligence!

WOULD you call him mad, or worse than mad, who under sentence of death should refuse to read or pray?—Would your blood chill if you saw him carousing and gaming, or taking opiates to forget his condition?—On the contrary, would you not rejoice to hear him groan to GOD?—Would it not transport your heart with joy to hear him humbly confessing of his guilt, and ardently seeking forgiveness thro' the blood of JESUS? Would not such conduct afford you favorable hopes of his state hereafter? Why then will you who are *condemned already*, and e're long, perhaps *to day* must go to execution—Why will you neglect to think of death,—Why will you *increase* its horrors by vainly attempting to forget it?—You may fatally succeed in your attempts.—I say *fatally*, for he who considers not that he must die, when DEATH arrests him will be unprepared for that great change; the
consequence

consequence of which let CONSCIENCE inform you. How foolish will your excuse be?—You put it off because the subject was unpleasing. And yet *unpleasing* as it is, you nurse it in your heart to greater growth.—You entertain its *parent* with delight, and by that means make the child a more formidable enemy. Whereas, if you wage war with its mother and destroy her, the child will be disarmed, the parent being *slain* its *sting* will be *extracted*; for its *parent* and its *sting* are *one*. —“ Death entered the world by sin”. And “ The sting of death is sin.”

THE greater distance we keep from death, i. e. the *less* we think of it, we are acting the part of a weak nerved girl, who flies from her own protracted shadow under the apprehension of being pursued by some enormous SPECTRE. We must *accustom* ourselves to think of it, and to enter into the *closest* views of it, or we never shall be so reconciled to it as to declare with that *religious* hero—“ When I pass thro’ the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.” Many indeed affect to talk of dying with great pleasantry while they are at a *distance* from it, but let DEATH *approach*, and their tale will turn with the old man’s in the fable. There is no saying
with

with truth, " I will *fear* no evil," unless we can subjoin,—FOR THOU ART WITH ME. To know that CHRIST is *with* us, " who hath abolished death."—That he is our protector.—That we are reconciled to GOD *thro'* him—*this* only can give us courage to pass thro' the dark dominion of the grave ; over which an *apostolic* hero proclaimed a glorious conquest—" O grave where is thy victory ?" —The conquest is mine, *thro'* the merits of HIM who vanquished death, and defeated the black battalions of the infernal regions. Our hearts, if hard as adamant itself, must sink within us at the approach of those formidable troops in the vale of death, if CHRIST is not our safeguard.—If he is with us we shall *shout* as *victors*—if he is absent we must *weep* as *cap-tives*. If in that important moment HE appears not, pale horror will appal our soul—but if HE smiles, triumphant joy shall crown our happy brow.

YOU see then that your business is to meditate on death ; to consider that you were born to die—this will force you to apply to JESUS in due season, without whose assistance death will be insupportable. No longer love-folly and madness, but earnestly cry to your SAVIOUR for the pardon of your sins, and from
their

their future dominion; and death which is now your dread will be your great delight. Without this *assurance* we can have no solid happiness.—Nay we are in the greatest danger without it. We may be ordered to embark at a moment's warning, and if we make that eternal voyage without *it*, we shall, when too *late*, upbraid ourselves for our folly in lying so secure and inactive in the harbour of mortality, when we should have laden our vessel with stores for ETERNITY.—In this business let us be *earnest* and *persevering*, and always remember we are embarked in a vessel richly laden, sailing on the boisterous seas of *pride* and *passion*, where rocks, unnoticed or unexplored, lie immoveably fixed to wreck our vessel and destroy our cargo. Regardless of our compass, the *word* of GOD, we often strike upon those hidden dangers, but thro' continued obstinacy and blindness how many strike and *sink* FOR EVER!—How hopeless and distracting must be the condition of such thoughtless wretches when the grave yawns for their reception, and in elated accents proclaims a *conquest*.

HERE let us pause. Deliberately review the augmenting miseries of the sinking soul—*sinking* far distant from the assistance of a merciful

ciful SAVIOUR, who offered to pilot it over the stormy seas of life, thro' the straits of death, and conduct it into the haven of everlasting peace, where the invaluable cargo might have been landed without hazard, and lodged in the splendid courts of *inexhausted* glory!

Now let us each propose a solemn question to our hearts.—Am I about to launch into the eternal world?—What preparation am I making for this important voyage? Consider, O, my soul!—The flowery wreaths of ambition—the most attracting garlands of vanity must wither e're long, and lose their *imaginary* worth. There will be no satisfaction on a dying pillow in the recollection of past enjoyments—Nor, will any excuse be sufficient for my negligence, either in the court of heaven, or my own conscience. The dread tribunal of an affronted MAJESTY, will treat me with impartial but *inexorable* justice.—Be thou therefore resolved to secure eternal happiness, and in the *strength* of JESUS break thro' every seeming impossibility which surrounds thee—resolve to be what GOD approves, and *live* for ever!

DID we always thus consider and resolve, we should act the part becoming us—we should
wait

wait at the throne of grace with joy, and derive from it that living faith which only can alleviate our troubles, and dismiss the fears of our heart under the apprehension of approaching death. *That* will enable us to view the expanded jaws of the grave with serenity, and make us desire to lay our bodies in it, that our spirits may be more immediately present with the LORD of HOSTS. Unless we possess *this faith* nothing will afford us pleasure, nothing can make us happy. Whatever else may court us under the specious name of happiness will prove but misery and woe;—thousands have experienced this while living, and deeply lamented it at their demise.

DOES it not behove us to search after the surest path to happiness, seeing that this mortal must soon put on an happy or a miserable *immortality*? “O, that we were wise, that we redeemed our time!”—That we so numbered our days as to apply our hearts to true wisdom!

NOTHING can plead more powerfully, with a candid mind, for *heart-felt* religion, than the awful reflection *we soon must die*!—Have you my friends seriously weighed the momentous matter?—If so, happy are ye, for

ye live in the due execution of those things the grand reflection dictates to be done. But if your consciences condemn you for omitting your duty to GOD, your soul and your neighbour, remember ye are as yet in your blood, and if ye die in this deplorable condition, ye must fall unhappy victims to the vindictive fury of all righteous heaven. —“ O, that ye were wise that ye understood this, that ye did but consider your latter end !”

I CHARGE you, O ye impenitent ! In the name of the great JEHOVAH, to flee from the wrath to come,—“ the bitter pains of everlasting death.” Make no excuses, DEATH will not regard them, nor be prevailed on for a small moment to postpone the execution of your fate.—“ In the grave there is no repentance.”—There nothing can be done to atone for your folly, or wash away your guilt.—Consider, SIRS, the executioner is at hand ! At the farthest he is in near advance upon us ! The revolving moment may bring him to our view !—If so,—no prayers or promises will prevail upon him to retreat. Should he be advancing on the swift pinions of the coming moment, and we
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be hurried hence in all our sins and blood,—(O, how can humanity remain unshocked under the alarming probability!) What but eternal ruin—banishment from GOD—perpetual pain and misery can be our lot!—In such a sad condition as this,—lost to every hope of a release, we must cry in doleful accents, urged by severest tortures,—“ Better had it been for us, had we never been born!” Seeing what may be the unhappy consequence of procrastinating matters, can I suffer you to go hence without charging you, in pity to your souls, to *immediate* repentance? Say not to-morrow—*to-morrow* is *not* ours, and ’tis possible it never may. Nor go hence and say ye know not how to repent. I tell you, cry mightily to GOD in the publican’s petition, “ GOD be merciful to me a sinner!” Let it be addressed in *sincerity*, and be *assured* of receiving the intreated blessing.

ONCE more,—Consider SIRS, the consequence of dying *in* your sins!—Your body *must die*! ’tis true;—but the jewel lodged within you *must live* for ever; and in the last great audit be arraigned at the awful tribunal of an injured JESUS, who enthroned in inconceivable glory—arrayed in dreadful majesty—at-

tended by myriads of bright battalions of the seraphic armies, with ten thousand legions of various orders of the celestial world—will command you to be dragged all pale and gashed from the dark caverns of the grave, before his *sin-condemning* bar!—Then that very voice which heretofore whispered ten thousand gentle invitations, more terrible than ten thousand times ten thousand loudest thunders, shall doom you to ETERNAL ruin,—*infinite* despair!—Unfathomable misery must catch you in your fall, and damned fiends be your tormenting associates thro' an *endless* for ever!—Who remains unhocked at thoughts like these? How stand your hearts affected now?—Does stubborn nature yield?—Do ye tremble at the damnable effects of sin?—O! my fellow finners!—For your own souls sake, consider you are men of *few days*—that your life is a life of *trouble*, and if not troubled *now* on account of *sin*, must feel for ever the torments of the DAMNED! A *few* more hours, and your thread is spun!—After a *few* more rising and setting suns have looked upon you, your eyes will be closed in the darkness of a long cold night!

MAY gracious heaven preserve your precious souls ! May ye receive my admonitions with just regard, *then* you'll serve GOD in *sincerity*, and save your souls EVER-
LASTINGLY.

SERMON

May God's blessing preserve your pro-
phet's life. May he receive his share
of the reward, and may his name be
God's name, and his your God.

SERMON

S E R M O N I I I .

LUKE xix. 10.

FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK
AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.

THE preceding verses furnish us with an account of the memorable conversion of ZACCHEUS; whose *riches* and *office* made it the more extraordinary. The narrative is introduced with a note of admiration to excite our greater attention, and to inform the *rich*, notwithstanding what CHRIST had before declared, viz.—“ It is easier for a camel to go thro’ the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven;” that HE is willing to save *them* if they will sell all and follow him. GOD expresses no particular dislike to the *persons* of the rich, nor does he ever mean to exclude them from future happiness on account of their *riches*;—but that undue attachment which they too frequently discover to riches, and the vanities they

they lead to, naturally draw off their pursuit from the "One thing needful,"—and prove, too often, unhappy incitements to self-gratification, and the greatest hindrances to that *self-denial* which JESUS has enjoined *all* his disciples to practice.

THE account which ZACCHEUS had heard of the celebrated JESUS, raised his curiosity to see him as he passed thro' JERICHO ;—but his stature being low he was prevented by the surrounding multitude. This however, did not discourage him from a second effort ;—notwithstanding his dignity he ran forward and climbed up into a Sycamore tree, by which he knew JESUS would pass ;—who when he came to the place looked up and addressed ZACCHEUS by name, and informed him of the honor he intended him that day. What astonishment must ZACCHEUS have felt at this juncture !—To find himself singled out of this vast concourse, and *thus* familiarly accosted by a person who was altogether a stranger to him ! Undoubtedly he had heard of the MESSIAH who was to come—and now, perhaps, it recurred to his mind that this very wonderful person who had *raised the dead—cast out devils—cleansed the lepers—and restored the blind*, must be that expected great deliverer ;

liverer;—thus conscious of HIS divinity he hastily descended and *joyfully* received him.

It is not improbable that at this juncture he proposed to himself, some singular advantage in entertaining this *wonderful* guest. Most likely, he had frequently found an *internal* disorder which all his wealth and dignity could by no means cure; and finding that JESUS relieved *all* who applied to him, he thought *this* a favorable opportunity to prove the virtue of his prescriptions!—Considerations like these prompted him to an immediate entertainment of this DIVINE personage. But—“ When the multitude saw it, they all *murmured*”—not so much with surprize, perhaps, as indignation. Probably they were mostly *Pharisees*, and therefore could not reconcile this familiarity between so *holy* a person as JESUS, and a character so *detested* as ZACCHEUS,—for he was *chief* of the *Publicans*; i. e. a tax-gatherer, who by extortion had acquired his riches. But HE whose ways are not as our ways, thought proper in *this* manner to confirm a former gracious declaration, viz.—“ I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” He intended by this sudden change upon ZACCHEUS, to *confound* the wisdom

wisdom of the self-approving *Pharisee*—and mercifully *encourage* the self-condemned *Publican* to apply to him for pardon. And to convince them of HIS power to *save*, and the sincerity of this new convert: the grace which HE had imparted to ZACCHEUS induced him to make a profession of his *faith*—calling JESUS—LORD,—and the consequent fruits of a *living* faith,—*charity* and *uprightness*!—His charity—“The half of my goods I give to the poor”—what a change!—That this griping penurious *Publican*, should so soon *abhor* his former *avarice* and commence *liberal*! His uprightness.—“If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.” All the restitution that the law required. In *this* he exceeded the strictest *Pharisee*, his honesty was the effect of *principle* not of *ostentation*. Having in this manner proved his conversion, JESUS confirmed the blessing he had bestowed upon this *son* of ABRAHAM: who was so called, not because he was lineally descended from ABRAHAM, who is styled the *Father* of the *faithful*; but because he like *this* father acted faith upon, and believed in GOD.—This was acting agreeable to the tenor of that commission which HE gave to his disciples,—“Go ye into all the world and preach

preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth shall be saved";—which ZACCHEUS having done, our LORD subjoins the text,—" For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

IN treating these words, we shall consider the *condition* of mankind by *nature*.—And

THE grand *errand* upon which JESUS CHRIST came into the world.

LET us consider the *condition* of mankind by *nature*.—The text declares, it to be a *lost* state. And this will evidently appear, if we consider what man *was once* possessed of.—GOD made him *upright*—created him in HIS own *image*—crown'd him with *happiness*, and pronounced him *blessed*. He experienced that mystic happiness which *true* believers in JESUS now enjoy.—He lived *in* GOD and GOD *in* him.

BUT, are we the possessors of this primeval rectitude ?—No.—We are born strangers to GOD, and willing captives to a base *usurper*;—" Conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity." This is evident from our disobedience, and the carnality of our mind, which " Is enmity against GOD!" Man by

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the *fall* is apostatized from GOD; for if we loved GOD, as it is pretended that we do, by those who are ignorant of their own depraved hearts, we should keep his commandments, and they would not be grievous but delightful to us. Now nothing is more certain than that,—“The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”—The daily conduct of the most moral person (I mean *merely* moral) will be a strong corroboration of the APOSTLE’S Assertion.—The services which the *mere* moralist performs, do not proceed from a pure *affection* to the ALMIGHTY,—on the contrary—they are occasioned by strong apprehensions of future *punishment* should he neglect them;—this urges him too frequently to cry LORD, LORD!—When his *heart* is *far* from the LORD. Such a person is ignorant of that delight in GOD which ADAM experienced, till he transgressed the gentle injunction. We are not disposed, *naturally*, to *think* of GOD any more than we can help, nor to render him more services than, we think, will *barely* serve our turn; hence arises self-approving from the discharges of merely external worship, tho’ *seldom* performed. Thus the best *natural* character will afford us proof sufficient that man has *lost* GOD.

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BUT this will appear still stronger, when we inquire after his *gratitude* to GOD, for the numberless blessings he daily heaps upon us, notwithstanding our vileness. Where shall we find those who speak good of HIS name? —Alas! how does the universe abound with blind ungrateful sinners, who discover no obligations that they are under to God's mercy; —and being equally ignorant of the *righteousness* of that *law* by which they will be judged, rest secure in their own, supposed, moral rectitude;—tho' their ingratitude to HIS goodness—and their repeated violations of his holy law, evince that their condition is dreadfully dangerous!—Can this proceed from any thing but the grossest ignorance of the *purity* and *truth* of the DIVINE BEING, who “ Searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of men ? ” — Such *ignorance* of his holiness and *ingratitude* to HIS goodness, shew us, if we will but see, that we have *lost* GOD.

IT will appear that we have *lost* God, from our want of discovering him in his righteous dispensations, whether prosperous, or adverse; if the *former*,—we compliment ourselves upon our sagacity and prudence;—if the *latter*,—we are condemned by others as neglectful, or pitied as unfortunate.—This accounts for

that *little* improvement which is made by us from those instructions of *providential goodness*.

As a farther proof of our having *lost* GOD : let us look among the “Beasts of the people.” Can we suppose that HE dwells in those who prophane his sabbaths—who call not upon HIS name, unless to damn either themselves or others—who despise HIS ordinances—who speak falsely one to another—who are guilty of extortion—who wallow in uncleanness—who stain themselves with blood—who are disobedient to parents—who disregard GOD’s word—who oppose his grace—who quench his *Holy Spirit*—who crucify the SON of GOD afresh—who resist not the devil—who harden their hearts—who ridicule the godly—who believe not the gospel.—I ask, can any sober mind suppose that GOD dwells *in* such persons, or they *in* GOD? The truth is, we have *all* sinned and forced GOD to *depart* from us ; so that by *losing* GOD we have *lost* our *happiness*.

OUR affectation of novelty—love of praise—fear of disappointment—avarice of gold—ambition of power—apprehensions of penury—impatience of controul—thirst of revenge—dread of death and judgment, together with
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the many dissipations, alarms and pursuits of the human mind, declare in the strongest terms that we are destitute of *that* which made EDEN a *paradise* to our first parent. The exterior blessings which surrounded him could have yielded him no delight, if the smiles of the ALMIGHTY had been eclipsed in his soul. *Sin* plundered him of his happiness, and is the cause of his *fallen* children's infelicity. *Sin*—that many headed monster, transformed the once glorious Lucifer into a self-tormenting *devil*,—and created all the horrors of the infernal world;—but not contented with this extensive empire, it daily spreads its malign effects among the sons of men;—the devastation which *it* has made among them is too discoverable in their perverted judgment, which vainly leads us to seek to regain the happiness we have *lost*—which we *feel* we *want*, in those things which lead us yet farther from it, and the GOD *in* whom *it* dwells.—What an enemy to mankind is *this* admired evil! What a melancholy proof do we give of our misery and ruin, by nursing this snake in our bosom, 'till our vitals are envenomed by it.

THIS review of our *loss* must doubtless affect us,—but still more, when we take into the catalogue the *loss* of our souls.—Yes, our

precious *souls* are lost.—We are dead while we live.—The sentence of the death that *never dies* is passed upon us, while living without God ; and we are every moment in danger of its being executed upon us !

WHOEVER considers himself a transgressor of GOD'S law—an *unpardoned* transgressor—will find himself “ Dead in trespasses and sins,”—unable to recover himself, or escape out of the pit into which he is fallen. The threatnings which Sinai fulminates against the violator of its rigorous law, which will be satisfied with nothing less than perfect obedience, informs the awakened *conscience* that its numberless transgressions have ruined and destroyed it.—Indeed when we *discover* ourselves to be in this *lost* condition, we are in a fair way of being found ; because this will force us to cry “ What shall I do to be saved ? ” Till this is the case, we may, with truth, be said to be *lost* and know it *not*. We amuse ourselves in the *short* season of life with vanity and lies, and ramble on in the labyrinths of sensuality, till the *night* of *death* closes upon us with irresistible *horror*.

How sad is the condition of poor fallen man ! Wretched—miserable—blind and naked,

ed, yet fancying himself rich and needing nothing!—What rubbish is the precious jewel buried in—how far fallen from its happy center—what darkness is it involved in—how little of its bright original is to be discovered! *It* is led captive, by SATAN, without reluctance, and fast bound in misery and iron. *It* pursues, either *ignorantly* or *wantonly*, its own ruin, and urges its way to the horrible pit, where “Hope never comes.” *Such* O, man is thy condition, notwithstanding thy wisdom—birth—fortune or virtue, whilst thou art not *born again* of the HOLY SPIRIT, or unrestored to the DIVINE favor, thro’ *faith* in the meritorious blood of JESUS.

SERMON

S E R M O N IV.

LUKE xix. 10.

FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK
AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.

WE will now proceed to the second consideration, viz. The grand *errand* upon which CHRIST came into the world.

THE text says, “ HE came to seek and to save that which was lost,” He came to *seek* us in his own person, exposing himself to innumerable inconveniencies; constantly going about doing good to the bodies of men, to induce them to depend on HIM for the salvation of their souls; and to accomplish this great undertaking, he laid down his life, *a ransom*, for them, and thereby justly acquired the eminent title of the GOOD SHEPHERD—who preferred the happiness of *lost* sinners before his own *blood*, by which HE still seeks us. In this CHRIST deals with us in the most rational manner; for how natural

tural is it to suppose, that upon our hearing, or reading, of the *passion* and *death* of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, it would put us upon enquiring into the cause of his *crucifixion*. And who that does so can be insensible, that “ HE was wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our transgressions”—That “ The LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all.” And as these scriptures so plainly inform us that the *blood* of JESUS is the *only* ground of our happiness;—how powerfully should we be induced to pursue our inquiry.—“ Have I the benefit of *it* applied to my heart—Am I sprinkled with *it* from an *evil* conscience ?” Questions of this kind, *solemnly proposed*, bid fair, to open to us a greater view of our *lost* condition, and to drive us to *that* fountain, which was opened for *sin* and uncleanness.

CHRIST may be said to *seek* us by his *blood*, not only as the scriptures speak of the spilling of *it* in so tragical a manner, with a design to affect our passions and mend our hearts,—but as this *blood* of the LAMB of GOD, is the *foundation* of the gospel; and I may add, the *procurer* of the *spirit*, seeing that DIVINE *Justice* could not have been satisfied without *it*, and consequently the offices of
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this promised *guide* and COMFORTER would have been totally unnecessary.

THIS *blood* may be said to *seek* us, as CHRIST pleads the *merits* of it on *our* behalf, and those intercessions afford us occasions of procuring the greatest blessings, which otherwise we should not have obtained.

EVERY dispensation of PROVIDENCE speaks powerfully to our *reason*, in order to reclaim us from the world, and to direct us to build on the ROCK OF AGES for everlasting peace.

JESUS CHRIST *seeks* us by his *word*, which contains all his will concerning us. Every man is so strongly characterized therein, that if we will not shut our eyes, we cannot fail to discover our deformity by *sin*. Whoever will examine himself by this unerring rule, must stand convinced that his heart is a cage of unclean birds—a sink of iniquity!—That murders, thefts, and all manner of uncleanness issue from *this* source of *evil* and corruption. *It* lays a man open to himself, and detects him in all his disguises. If he secures himself in the *conceit* of his virtue, *this word* will inform him, that he was “Conceived in *sin*.”

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That “ The thoughts of his heart,” however good in his own esteem, “ are only evil continually.”—*It* will tell him that GOD “ Searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of men.”—That “ There is none that doeth good, no not one.”—That, all the world must stand *guilty* in HIS sight who cannot behold iniquity. Thus JESUS *seeks* the sinner by shewing him that he is *lost*, that his heart is desperately wicked, and that as “ All his righteousnesses are but as filthy rags, he must have a better righteousness than the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, or never enter into the kingdom of GOD.”

If men are living atheistical lives, i. e. *without GOD in the world*;—JESUS by his *word* seeks their recovery, by thundering informations of their danger, such as—“ Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming.”—“ The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget GOD.” If they are pursuing the brutal enjoyments of their carnal appetites, HE exposes to them their dangerous situation to draw them to himself.—“ Whoremongers, adulterers, abominable, and all liars, &c. shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone.”—And like LOT’s angel he exhorts
them

them to escape for their lives.—He instructs them to, “Agree with their adversary quickly while they are in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver them to the judge, and the judge deliver them to the officer and they be cast into prison,” where they must remain till they have *paid the uttermost farthing*. He assures them “If they repent not they shall all likewise perish;”—If they “Believe not they shall be damned.”—All these *terrors* are revealed in *mercy*, and are intended to drive sinners from *sin* and *Satan*, to JESUS and eternal safety.

HE seeks us, by proclaiming himself—“The LORD GOD gracious and merciful”—By promising mercy and abundant pardon to those, who forsake their wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, and return unto him.”—He encourages the *weary and heavy laden* to come to him, by subjoining a promise of *rest* unto their souls. Thus JESUS *seeks* sinners by his *word*, in which he describes their several dangers—and by the *threatnings* he there denounces against the *impenitent*, and the *encouragement* he affords the *broken hearted*.

CHRIST also *seeks* us by his *Spirit*. Let us attend to this in a more particular manner.

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We are in a situation very similar to a traveller in a vast pathless desert, who having sunk into the arms of sleep for the refreshment of his wearied limbs, forgets the quarter from whence he came; and whose perplexities are still augmented by the thick shadows of approaching night,—in this distress he rambles, he knows not whither 'till he happily meets some guide or director. GOD's *Spirit* is that to *lost mankind*, what the guide or director is to the traveller; *It* as clearly points out to our souls the way to peace, as the guide conducts the traveller to the city he wants to arrive at.

It is true, no man ever came into the world without GOD's *Spirit* to assist and guide him, as St. JOHN declares, "He, (the word) was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," i. e. He was, and is the procuring cause of it. There is indeed a necessity for every man to have this *light*; seeing that without this *light*, or *Spirit*, we should be *totally* incapable of answering GOD's just demands, and of course our situation here would not be *probationary*, nor could we be deemed accountable as we *now are*. It will, perhaps, be here inquired.—If all men have this *light*, or *Spirit*, why then are not all men

men in the right way?—The answer is short and ready.—“ The darkness comprehended, or *perceived*, it not.” As men love darkness, or evil deeds, they will not suffer themselves to attend to this *light*, because it reproves their folly and shews them the consequence of it,—tho’ at the same time it points out to them a way to escape. Two things especially concur to put out *this light*, or to divert us from it. The one is—the *arch-enemy* of our happiness, by placing such temptations before us, as are most likely to allure us into *sin*. The other is—our infatuated *propensity* to evil. Whoever would be benefited by this *Spirit*, must resist the darkness, or evil.

To set this in a clearer light, we will have recourse to the *Antediluvians*. GOD had no desire to deluge and destroy them, but on the contrary to *save* them; to which end he appointed NOAH, that preacher of righteousness, to warn them of their danger, at the same time his *Spirit* attempted their reformation,—but without effect!—They derided the one, and *resisted* the other, so that GOD protested, “ My *Spirit* shall not always strive with man.” Here it is evident GOD’s *Spirit* did strive with them, and ’tis equally obvious that they resisted that which they might

have obeyed, and by obeying, would doubtless have escaped the calamity which overtook them. The case is still the same, there are those among us who grieve GOD's HOLY SPIRIT from day to day. Men in all ages are born in darkness and the *love* of it; and this darkness is equally pernicious in all generations. GOD, who is *no respecter* of persons, deals with *all* alike in the essentials of our recovery, tho' it is conveyed to us in various dispensations.—In a word, this SPIRIT is the *primum mobile* in every man.

By this *Spirit*, St. PETER says, CHRIST was quickened, or raised from the dead.—By this *Spirit* “ He preached unto the spirits in prison;” meaning, either the spirits *imprisoned* in the *body*, or fast bound in *trespasses* and *sins*. Nor was this manner peculiar to the *Antediluvians* only. By this *Spirit* he instructed PATRIARCHS—PROPHETS—EVANGELISTS and APOSTLES. And CHRIST has promised to be with his *faithful* servants unto the end of the world, not in *person* surely, but thro' this *Spirit*.

THAT this *Spirit* does *now* strive with men, appears from those convictions which harrafs and distress us, when we act contrary to the
DIVINE

DIVINE will ; these convictions are occasioned by the *light* manifesting the darkness, which only pains us when known to us. I know some will say this is the light of *nature*, *reason*, or *conscience*. Let it be remembered that the transgression of ADAM *extinguished* the light that was in him ;—*he died* i. e. by losing the DIVINE *life*, or *light*, or *Spirit*, call it which you will ; he became a *chaos* in himself.—“ All was darkness and uproar.” He had a sense of his transgression, but *saw* no way for his recovery ’till the promise was made to him ;—“ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” At this juncture, most likely, he had a measure of *light*, or the *Spirit*, given unto him to profit withal. But as this was a gift bestowed on him for his *own* recovery, and which he might *lose* as well as the *former*, it was *no natural* property of his ; and therefore he could not bestow upon us any other patrimony than *darkness*. ’Tis in the *moral* as in the *natural* world.—Night was *antecedent* to day in the *natural*—and in the *moral* darkness *prior* to light. As day is occasioned by the light which the elementary *Sun* conveys to us, so is light the immediate *esult* of GOD’s *Spirit*. The natural consequence of darkness, *unenlightened*, would be darkness ;

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therefore when the *Sun* retires from our part of the *Globe*, the elder born of nature becomes predominant. And as darkness would produce darkness, an *eternity* of darkness, in one world ; so would it in the other. You observe when *GOD* was about to form our world, he said, " Let there be light,"—so he continues to act in every part of his creation, without light nothing in the *natural* world can be *good*, in the *moral* nothing without it can be *happy*. The will of *GOD* is the happiness of *all* his creatures ; therefore *HE* sends forth his *light* and his *truth*, i. e. his *Spirit* into *all* our hearts. However, let us inquire what light we have of our *own*—search *reason*.

If we inspect the conduct of the *most* refined rationals,—the *GRECIAN* and *ROMAN* sages, we shall be forced to smile at many of their conceits, and as deeply lament those fatal errors for which they are immortalized by our modern *Heathens*. If we follow them into their temples, we shall see them prostrating themselves before *inanimate* representatives of the *inferior* classes of the *animal* creation. Their *boasted* reason, independent of *DIVINE light*, led many of the, supposed, most rational into things as opposite to the revealed will

will of **GOD**, or the dictates of his *Spirit*, as **CHRIST** and *Belial* differ in their nature. *Suicide*, forbidden by **GOD**, and indeed by mere *instinct*, was by many of them esteemed the noblest achievement,—and to risk the enjoyment of the greatest blessings *hereafter*, was by them, preferred to a just resistance of the slightest *present* inconveniencies. Thus far *reason*, so much boasted, will carry men when unrestrained by the reproofs of an *internal* monitor, or unchecked by plain *revelation*. I do not say that they were *all* thus ignorant—or that there was the least *necessity* for any of them to be so.—No, some few there were who could discover that “All things are full of **GOD**,”—and preferred *virtue* before *life* itself; but *mere reason* did not occasion this difference;—it was owing to that necessary obedience which they paid to that *light*, and being faithful to this grace, their is no doubt but **GOD** accepted them according to that which they had.

WHEN men speak of CONSCIENCE, they seem to treat of it as something *independent* of **GOD**—as something which is a *natural inseparable* property of man, as blood, bones, &c.—but this is a grand mistake, and takes its birth, I suppose, from the early dawnings
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of this DIVINE *light* upon the human mind, which they therefore, take to be *natural*:— and if they have adopted the doctrine of *unconditional election*, they are still more positive, as that *unhappy* scheme teaches them to suppose, that no man has GOD's *Spirit* who is not under very great distress of soul;—or, as they phrase it, that GOD does *not* intend to bring home *effectually* to himself.—But all this is chimera, and will prove to be so while that scripture continues, “ HE is that light,” &c. CONSCIENCE is GOD's *Spirit* shining in *our* darkness as it once moved upon the face of the deep, and is designed by JESUS CHRIST to do that *in* us, which it once effected in the *exterior* creation. This *light* is given to us to *shew* us our *darkness*, and to *lead* us on to the perfect day. All this is clear from the case of CORNELIUS, who was a *Gentile*, and therefore likely to be esteemed unclean by PETER, for which reason the vision was shewn to him.

How careful should men be *not* to *quench* this good *Spirit* of our GOD, by which he seeks us, and invites us to return to him— by which HE preaches in us, and exhorts us to *hear*, that we being *dead in trespasses* may awake to righteousness. To excite our
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greater attention, we must remember it is a *still small voice*, which whosoever obeys, JESUS "Will come in and sup with him," and set up HIS throne in his heart, and redeem him from that unrighteousness, in which we are so deeply *lost*. "If ye will hear my voice harden not your hearts,"—turn not the deaf ear to me. We must be as attentive to this *seeking Spirit*, as a man lost in a wood listens with all imaginable earnestness, in hope of hearing some villager pass by, of whom he may ask his right way. This *Spirit* calls after us, as GOD did after ADAM—"Where art thou." It shews the sinner his departure from GOD, and occasions him to mourn deeply. The *silent* lectures of GOD'S *Spirit*, when attended to, beget the deepest penitence, which urges the soul to cry "LORD save, or I perish!"—"GOD be merciful to me a sinner!"—To which CHRIST never fails to answer.—"I am thy salvation." The *Spirit* is then more eminently imparted to the sinner, inasmuch as it witnesseth with his spirit, that he is *reconciled* to GOD thro' CHRIST JESUS. This leads us to consider, very concisely, the second part of CHRIST'S errand, viz. to *save* that which was *lost*.

It was predicted of JESUS,—“ He shall save his people from their sins,”—from the *guilt* and *dominion* of them. Morally speaking, CHRIST cannot *save*, or make us happy, in any other way than by saving us *from our sins*. *Sin* implies all those tempers and dispositions of the heart, as well as all actions, that are *contrary* to the *will* of GOD. This “ Work of the devil,” CHRIST came to *destroy* in us, that he might recover us from our ruin—restore us to the *image* and *favor* of GOD—disarm the *angel* of his flaming sword—and open a retreat for us to our *recovered* EDEN. The *Spirit* of JESUS is to do all this *in* us, and will enable us to oppose and conquer those lusts and passions which have dominion over us—to “ Perfect holiness in the fear of the LORD,” and to keep a conscience void of offence, toward GOD and man.”

How desirable must *this salvation* appear to a truly considerate mind! What can be more desirable than a *quiet* CONSCIENCE—an internal testimony of the DIVINE favor?—No employments can afford us such happiness as a true care and diligence to serve HIM, whose service is *perfect freedom*:—and which at last GOD will graciously reward, not only

only by securing us *from* everlasting death, but with the inexpressible felicity of dwelling with HIM world *without end!*

BUT to place the nature of *this* SALVATION in a stronger light.—'Tis to have *darkness* vanish, and the *day* dawn—to be freed from *chains* and set at *liberty*—to exchange *passion* for *meekness*, and *pride* for *humility*—to have *avarice* rooted out, and *benevolence* implanted—to lose *peevishness* and find *patience*—to barter *prophaneness* for *piety*, and the *fear* of death for the *hope* of *glory*—to resist the *devil* and submit to GOD—to hate *sin* and love *holiness*—to escape ETERNAL death and reign in everlasting LIFE. This is the *salvation* JESUS offers to the *lost*, ruined sons of men.

NOTHING remains but that you should be admonished not to neglect this great SALVATION. That which your enemy would urge as the most cogent reason to prevent your seeking after the attainment of it, is the *very* reason why CHRIST *seeks* to bestow it upon you, viz.—Your being a *great*, a *lost* sinner.—If you are conscious that you are a *lost* sinner, CHRIST has so far sought you to good purpose.—His *Spirit* hath shewn you this, that on your part, you may seek after JESUS

SUS, to be saved by him. The *lost* were those that JESUS came to *seek*; whoever therefore *denies* his being *lost*, cannot expect any benefit from HIS coming, or the merits of HIS death, which *only* can *save* us. Be it remembered then, that CHRIST came to seek the *lost only*. He “ Came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!” He “ Came to seek and to save” All “ That was lost,” viz. *All* mankind.—“ We have all sinned and come short of the glory of GOD.” —“ CHRIST tasted death for every man.” —“ He died for the sins of the whole world.” —“ The LORD laid on HIM the iniquity of us *All*!”—Therefore *All* men were *lost*, and by virtue of our REDEEMER’S death we may *All* be *saved*,—“ Look unto me *All* ye ends of the earth and be ye saved.” All this has the *friend of sinners* done to recover us! —but remember, as HE will not do *violence* to any man’s will, when HE has opened our eyes, he expects us to *seek* for this salvation. HE expects us to be “ Workers together with him.”—To induce us to which, HE has made us “ Great and precious promises,” viz.—“ Seek and ye shall find, ask and it shall be given unto you!”—“ Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Here is all the encouragement a poor sinner can

can wish for. If he wants *repentance* let him *ask* it of JESUS, " Who hath received gifts even for the ungodly", who is exalted to bestow it—" HIM hath GOD exalted with his right hand to be a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." If any man wants *faith*, as well as wisdom, " Let him ask it of GOD, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto him."

Do not rest in a bare *hearing* of what CHRIST *has done*, and is willing *to do* for you, this will advantage you nothing, unless it be done *in* you. Labor therefore to make your calling and election sure, by giving up yourselves daily to ALMIGHTY GOD in fervent *prayer*—and by diligently watching your *thoughts, words, and works*; constantly aiming at HIS glory, and the good of your fellow creatures. Whosoever doth *these things* shall not fail of happiness in *this* life, or in *that* which is to come.

S E R M O N V.

JOB xxxvi. 11.

IF THEY OBEY AND SERVE HIM, THEY SHALL SPEND THEIR DAYS IN PROSPERITY, AND THEIR YEARS IN PLEASURE.

AFFLICTION, in our present relation to the things of time and sense, is as absolutely necessary to our future happiness, as the food we use is to the support of our persons; and therefore a *wise*, and *good* GOD, sends those seemingly severe visitations as a preparative to the greatest blessings. The person whose sufferings gave occasion to the composition of *this* book, called after his own name, was an eminent instance of GOD's peculiar care, when the imperfect judgment of short-sighted mortals concluded him abandoned to misery, and utterly forsaken by the *great* PROTECTOR of mankind.

To

To prevent us from easily yielding to despair, GOD has thought proper to assure us, that he “ Does not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men,” and consequently that whenever HE does afflict them, there is an absolute *necessity* for his doing it. We can only judge from appearances, and therefore we are often led to draw very wrong conclusions, and to arraign the ALMIGHTY at our tribunal, for his dealings with the sons of men;—but HE who is *perfect* in wisdom, and thoroughly acquainted with the human heart cannot err;—nor is it possible for HIM who was *bruised* for *our* transgressions to treat us with more rigor and severity than we justly deserve.

IT may seem strange to those who read JOB's character, in the introduction of his history, to find a person who “ was perfect and upright—that feared GOD and eschewed evil,” involved in such a series of formidable distresses;—for the elucidation of which, we will take a short review of JOB, in his *prosperous* and *adverse* situation; wherein we shall see—The gracious *design* of GOD in *afflicting* man.—And the *prosperity* and *pleasure* of GOD's servants.

As

As to JOB's character and situation. He was allowed to be a perfect and an upright man, &c. And, considered in his *civil* relation to mankind, he undoubtedly was so :— a just pattern, and highly worthy of imitation. Tho' he was dignified in his character, and blessed with an ample fortune, he thought it an addition to his honor and happiness, to descend to the relief and protection of the necessitous *orphan* and disconsolate *widow*—to visit those who were in *affliction*, and to comfort the *captive*; these acts of humanity justly procured him the esteem of his subjects, and rendered his name dear to the objects of his munificence and clemency. So far was JOB upright in his *civil* and *social* character. His situation was most desirable while *prosperity* and *honor* were his constant attendants. —But human happiness is too *transient*, to yield us those *solid* comforts we are directed to seek alone in GOD! His *religious* character was such, as yielded him no small happiness 'tis evident from his constant sacrifices to GOD, not only on his own account, but his childrens also ;—who thro' their fondness for vanity, he justly thought were likely to bring down vengeance upon themselves, unless averted by humble and passionate supplications to the ALMIGHTY. This office

of prayer and sacrifice was his constant employment ; and employments of *this* nature, will, more or less, be productive of *peace* and *assurance*. But however happy JOB might appear to be in these circumstances, there was *something* wanting to compleat his felicity, and that those were convinced of, who were desirous of no other happiness, than that which he was supposed to enjoy, while honor and prosperity played their fickle beams upon him. Had JOB been as happy *in* GOD, as it was possible for him to have been, the request of his grand enemy had not been permitted to have been executed upon him.

AT a season when “ The sons of GOD came to present themselves before the LORD,” perhaps to return a general thanksgiving for some signal instance of *providential* goodness, “ The accuser of the brethren” presented himself among them ; and on being interrogated by the LORD, from whence, as well as the errand, upon which he came ; he boldly makes known his hellish purpose upon *this* upright man ;—against whom, he insinuates *hypocrisy* towards GOD, and makes *avarice* and *ambition* the leading causes of his mock submission : and in order to gain his end, rather than to prove so false an accusation, he requests permission
to

to touch him, i. e. to diminish his fortune, &c. which GOD suffers ;—not to gratify *Satan*, but to benefit his servant *JOB*, who was not yet fully acquainted with his own heart, and consequently, not sufficiently conscious of his infinite obligations to the *ALMIGHTY*, who had been pleased to notice him with such peculiar regard. And as a sense of his obligations were so much wanting, he could not be possessed of that inconceivable pleasure a generous heart must ever feel, in those warm expressions of *gratitude* and *love*.

As soon as permission was granted to this *arch-fiend*, he, together with his emissaries, speedily executed his malignant design. A messenger quickly arrived at the palace, and requested an audience with the *falling* *PRINCE*, and being brought into the royal presence, began the recital of the affecting story of his daughters *captivity*, and *murder* of his servants—but ere the relation was ended, arrived a *second*, to inform him that the angry elements had destroyed his sheep and servants by *fire*; and that he *only* had escaped to tell the dreadful news. A *third* hastily is introduced to acquaint him of the ravages the *Chaldeans* had committed,—when to compleat the fatal narration of his *sudden* and *great* calamities, came *another* with an account more dismal
and

and affecting than those related. He stands impatient to catch the *sense* of the *trembling* informer, whose *pallid* countenance and *faltering* speech, betrayed something too dreadful for nature, unaided, to sustain.—His treasures are consumed—what has he more to fear?—His *children*—Alas! How will he support under the dreadful information?—But dreadful as it is,— he must be informed—*They are no more*—that a *single* stroke severed them from his arms—while they were banqueting at their eldest brother's house, a tempest gathered in the wilderness, and with sudden violence threw down the edifice, and buried them in the ruins.—What still must add to his distress is,—their *unfitness* for so unexpected a removal.

HERE, JOB might have been expected to spurn submission from him, and to have given place to the perturbation of his mind.—But lo!—The pious *Father* 'midst all the tender emotions of his breast, prostrates himself at the footstool of his MAKER, while something more than *human* dictates to his heart, the confession uttered by his lips—"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."—Who could behold such amazing *fortitude*—*resignation* and
praise,

praise, without astonishment? Now he proved the usefulness of those sacred lessons he had learned in the school of RELIGION. *Philosophy* alone had been in vain.—His was “That grace,” promised, “to help, in every time of need.”

BUT more are the sorrows and trials he must yet endure; that the naughtiness of his heart might be *fully* discovered to him, and he happily delivered from it, for “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” *Satan* still pursues him with implacable malice, and obtains fresh leave to assault him, in a manner he apprehended would effect his wishes;—but GOD still means to use his malice for HIS servant’s happiness. So often does our great enemy miscarry in his designs against us; they often proving the very means of driving us *nearer* to HIM, he means to divert us from,

JOB, whose body was lately clad in purple, and anointed with odoriferous balm, and borne in his chariot amid the loud applauses, and huzzas of the admiring croud—attended at his palace by numerous levees, and worshipped by cringing sycophants—is now hurled from the pinnacle of human glory into the abyss
of

of wretchedness and pain.—Nauseous ulcers torment him, and prevent the refreshment of wished-for slumbers; and while he sinks beneath the insupportable anguish, the corrupted wounds send forth so strong a stench, that offended passengers avoid him; while those, he lately would not have ranked with the dogs of his flock, deride his misfortunes, and insult his misery—*relations* disown him, and his slaves exercise dominion over him.—The wretches whom his bounty preserved from destruction, pass by him regardless of his groans, and leave him unassisted, to end a life, to them *useless*—to him *intolerable*!

“ How are the mighty fallen ”—And this, O JOB, to shew thee the *insufficiency* of *created* good. Thy heart, perhaps, was beginning to be elated when popular regard was thine, and lest vain-glory should destroy thee HEAVEN interposed, and corrected thy folly.—But where’s his *patience* now?—hear him wishing for too *tardy* DEATH,—or wildly cursing the moment of his birth; distempers like these require a powerful antidote;—Take therefore, O JOB, the cup administered by the hand of HIM, whose *skill* and pity can alone assist thee.

THE proud conceit of his moral excellence, led him to charge the ALMIGHTY with unjust severity—"Thou knowest that I am not wicked, shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?"—Could a *conscious* sinner thus interrogate the GOD of *purity*—Or one who was fully acquainted with his own heart, pretend to justify himself before HIM? Here was apparent need of these severe chastisements, that his *pride* might be *humbled*, and his *heart purified*.

I WOULD here beg leave to observe, that our actions, *abstractedly* do not commend us to GOD, or *justify* us before him—nor do his *afflictive* dispensations argue *greater* guilt in the *sufferer*, than those who *escape*.—"The wicked, says DAVID, are not in trouble like other men."—And too frequently from their *supposed* prosperity they conclude themselves, the peculiar favorites of HEAVEN,—and charge the *afflicted*, unjustly, with sins that they know not.

This was manifestly the case with JOB, and his pretended friends BILDAD, ZOPHAR, and ELIPHAZ, who instead of offering him support by sympathetic condolence, aggravate his misery by charging him with *hypocrisy* and *impiety*, and absurdly infering that GOD deals adequately

adequately to the delinquent's demerit; in this life, and therefore *his* offences must have been of an unheard-of nature, since his sufferings were thus *extreme*. Thro' the whole of their conduct, they appear to have had their own glory in view; and affecting to justify the ALMIGHTY, meant only to aggrandize themselves, by concluding, that as GOD always deals according to mens deserts here, they were blessed with, and continued in prosperous circumstances. These unjust conclusions irritated JOB, and extorted from him expressions unbecoming a *sinner* under the rod of *affliction*.

UPON this ELIHU, a modest and wise youth, who had been privy to their preposterous converse; breaks his long silence, and, after making a becoming apology for his *youth*, undertakes the management of the controversy, thro' an humble and earnest desire to "Justify the ways of GOD to man." and to bring JOB into a proper submission to HIS righteous dispensations. And since the affair in which he was engaged was of so sacred a nature, he begs that he might "Accept no man's person, lest his maker should soon take him away." He proves to JOB his folly, in saying, "I am clean, without transgression :

gression: I am innocent,"—For GOD is righteous in all his dealings, and humbleth only to exalt, therefore it should be his duty to acquiesce and pray unto HIM, that he might be propitious unto him. And that the visitation might answer the end whereunto it was appointed, viz. to "Bring back his soul from the pit."

So *faithful* and rational a preacher as ELIHU, had never awakened JOB's attention. He warmly reproves him for his contempt of GOD, and base endeavor to justify himself at the expence of GOD's equity—shews him the imprudence of charging *Kings* with wickedness, and the greater wickedness of accusing him, "Who accepteth not the persons of princes."—He then exhorts him to confess his guilt, and promise amendment.

HE resumes the case; and directs JOB to consider the disparity of the *creature* and the CREATOR; and how impossible it is for the *greatest virtues* of a *finite* being, to add glory to an *infinite* GOD—who is the source of *all* good, whose *knowledge* is *perfect*, and whose worshippers must attend in *faith* and *sincerity* of heart, since the vain babbling of the lip is not accepted by HIM. He entreats for a

few moments more, that he may yet more *fully* prove the *goodness* of GOD;—and hopes for their attention, not being desirous of displaying his own abilities, or sallying forth in the parade of sophistry, rendered soothing and agreeable by florid phrases and harmonious periods, referring them to the opinions of the *wise* and *pious* in former generations, for the corroboration of his assertions.—“ I will bring my knowledge from afar.” He asserts GOD’s regard to man,—his love of virtue, and abhorrence of *vice*; and then adverts to the *pride* of human nature, while seated on the *pinnacle* of success,—and the obstructions GOD meets with in his remonstrances with men, whose affluence makes them spurn instruction, and conceive of themselves more highly than they ought;—Therefore when “ They be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of *affliction*; he sheweth them their transgressions, and openeth their ear to discipline.—If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.”

AFFLICTION, is the school in which we can *best* learn *obedience*. In *this* school, our lessons are adapted to our different *capacities, dispositions, and situation*. Some begin

giv^{ing} with *distresses* of *soul* for their sins; which is intended to work in us that repentance which needeth *no* repentance; and I believe we shall always find that the *greatest* distress on *this* account, is attended with the greatest comfort, and most *lasting* joy. Others, are introduced by worldly *losses* and *disappointments*—*sickness*, and the *death* of friends; by such *afflictions* they are brought, to an *acquaintance* with themselves,—an *abhorrence* of *sin*—to *contemn* the world, and *desire* glory. Many there are, who knew but little distress when they first set their hand to the plow, yet after a season have had a *train* of afflictions closely pressing upon them;—such as constant sickness in their families, or habitual diseases in their own persons. Shall we then say that GOD is unmerciful, or unjust—GOD *forbid*! If our hearts are unbroken, and remain *impenitent*, we shall live without any desire for the grace of GOD, and “Die without knowledge:”—therefore *afflictions* are highly necessary, and *most* profitable if *rightly* improved. *Losses* and *disappointments* are sent to *wean* us from the *world*.—*Sickness* and *death*, are graciously intended, to *keep* us in an *habitual* preparation for our *last* great change, to *deadens* our expectations from the creature,

creature, and *fix* us more firm on the CREATOR.

THIS was the case with JOB. Tho' heretofore he enjoyed abundance, and to all appearance made a *proper* use of it; yet he needed something more than *mere* externals to constitute him truly happy. His riches and rank, were the means of inducing many to magnify his virtues, who, thro' *fear*, were prevented from correcting his foibles;—thus his *vanity* being flattered, he secured himself in the conceit of his superior goodness; and how deep this security was, we have already seen.

WHEN JOB became veiled in the shades of *adversity*, and fancied himself utterly undone, he was *then* in the surest path to solid happiness. His situation imboldened ELIHU, to rectify his mistakes, by giving him a portrait of himself, without the colourings of flattery. This made some impression upon him, and *prepared* him to attend with reverence, the weighty questions GOD was about to propose to him; every one of which were calculated to expose the creature's *ignorance* and *imbecility*, and, at the same time, intended to display the CREATOR's *wisdom* and *power*. JOB heard with astonishment and *self-*

self-abhorrence, and humbly confessed his *presumption* and *vileness*.—" I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The grand design being now brought about, JOB being truly humbled, the ALMIGHTY not only restored to him his *former* favors, but *multiplied* his blessings upon him ; seeing he was able, thro' grace, to enjoy them to the glory of the great GIVER, and the real good of himself and others.

SERMON

S E R M O N VI.

JOB xxxvi. 11.

IF THEY OBEY AND SERVE HIM, THEY SHALL SPEND THEIR DAYS IN PROSPERITY, AND THEIR YEARS IN PLEASURES.

THE world is too apt to form wrong notions of happiness, and to ground their opinions upon external appearances. The idea of happiness is too commonly connected with *wealth,—reputation,—health, &c.* But men who are more acquainted with human nature, can explode this prevailing error ; and a *Christian* who is *destitute* of wealth, reputation, health, &c. feelingly knows that happiness has a more firm foundation than these, or any other such precarious things. True happiness exists *in GOD alone*, and whoever is truly an happy man, derives all his felicity from GOD, thro' the agency of the HOLY SPIRIT. *This* idea of happiness men are greatly ignorant of, and must remain so.

as long as they hold themselves *independent* of GOD, and are unacquainted with their own *helplessness*; for these conceits naturally keep men from that reverential waiting upon GOD, which is the *only* security of our happiness. We ought not to wonder then, when we see those *mistaken, self-sufficient, GOD-neglecting* creatures involved in difficulties, which are not only intended by the FATHER OF MERCIES, as a scourge for their impiety, but also to make them sensible of their error, and bring about a recantation of opinion and practice.

IF we attend to human nature in its present state, together with the *holy* requirements of the GOSPEL, we shall see the *necessity* of *affliction* to convince us of our helplessness, and to bring us to a momentary dependence upon GOD. In this view of things, we cannot fail to pity him, whose situation will naturally flatter his innate vanity,—puff him with false notions of his greatness, and keep him insensible of his danger and vileness. Had *that* rich man profited by any of his afflictions, for doubtless HE whose tender mercy is over all his works, did not omit to visit him with such remembrancers, he had not made so miserable an end.—But like too many of us, he ran his circle without making

ing a profitable pause. His conduct will enable us to guess what thoughts he entertained of his approaching dissolution,—and his *end* will testify what preparation he made for it. “ Cloathed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day,” he had no thoughts of his *helplessness*; and like the arrogant PHARAOH, asserted his *independence*.—The smiles of the world are more injurious to our happiness than we commonly suppose, therefore we are exhorted, “ Love not the world.” The love of the world, and the praise of mankind, is that to our souls what high living is to our bodies; while it pleases our palate, it destroys the constitution.

IF we look the world around, shall we find the most *prosperous*, the most *happy*?—i. e. the most *humble*,—for without humility there can be no felicity. In general we shall find such, most flushed with insolence, and regardless of the ALMIGHTY. If we carry on the observation, we shall often see the same person, when *adversity* has seized him, as courteous as he once was insolent; and if *affliction* answered no better end, yet its utility is evident from this circumstance. But does not *affliction* lead us, insensibly, to compare

compare our present with our former situation?—And may not the best improvements be made by these comparisons?—'Tis granted, that with many the kindest intentions of HEAVEN are perverted to their own ruin. Instead of leading us to consider the instability of every thing below—that we have no proper claim, even to the air we breathe, and that GOD has a right to dispose of his creatures, as seemeth him good; too frequently we repine at HIS dispensations, and conceive ourselves unjustly treated; this hardens the heart against GOD, and deluges us in a sea of insupportable misery.—The *world* has discarded us, and our *only refuge* we have *forced* to depart from us!—Yet the greatest advantages may be gained by *affliction*. When *relations* commence our enemies—when our *friends* turn their backs upon us—when—*fortune* no longer courts us—when *health* has forsaken us, and *penury* and *sickness* have laid hold upon us—when, like the SON OF MAN, we have *no where to lay our head*, unless in the gloomy apartments of a common *prison*, we may reap the greatest blessings. *These* distresses will prove fit occasions to reflect upon the vanity of human life,—to lament our neglect of GOD, and the unhappy
inattention

inattention we have paid to our *eternal* welfare.

PRAYER which is the best, and ought to be the *chief* business of the present life, is seldom thought of in *prosperity*. But *affliction* has an immediate tendency to urge men to call upon GOD. The *opulent* man discovers no need of prayer, which implies *necessity*. When men are regardless of *this* grand *duty*, the pleasing employment of *praise*, or *thanksgiving*, is equally neglected. For how can we expect men to thank *another* for that, which they suppose they owe to *themselves*.—For instance—

SUPPOSE a merchant to have acquired a great fortune, without having consulted the *great* DIRECTOR in any of his concerns, or having the *smallest* view to HIS glory; can we imagine that this man would return *humble thanks* to GOD for his success?—No. As he conceives all his success depended upon his own *penetration* and *industry*, he looks no *higher* than himself. Thus as his *riches* increase, so does his *vanity* and *avarice*. GOD seeing how far such a person is from answering the great purpose of his creation,
and

and the miserable consequences that must follow upon his *dying* in the same condition—He *mercifully* visits him with severe *afflictions*. His ships are lost—his houses burnt—his trade decays—his reputation sinks—his dealers break ; so that by these, and such like disasters, the affluent merchant, whose only view was to accumulate a large fortune ; who succeeded so much to his wishes, is in a *few days*, stripped of *all*—and obliged to solicit *charity* of those, to whom he had denied it. A man in such a situation is generally pitied, tho', in truth, there is great reason to congratulate him. His *affluence* had intoxicated him, but his *affliction* will make him sober. What would it have profited him, had he gained the whole world, and lost his own soul ?—And what loss will he now sustain, if by losing the *shadow* of happiness, he grasps the *substance* ? His necessities put him upon doing, what he ought to have been engaged in from the beginning ; which had he done, he might have been excused from this severe correction. Thus humbled under the mighty hand of GOD, he principally concerns himself in the interest of a better world.

WE shall see the use of *affliction* again, among those who have enjoyed uninterrupted *health*; frequently such persons impute it to a second cause, rather than to the goodness of GOD.—But when pining *sickness* arrests them, they discover the deception. What barrier can be found, sufficiently strong, to prevent the ravages of a burning *fever*?—Or what power to repel the meager *consumption*?—What can we do to divert the excruciating *stone*?—Or what can deliver us from the resistless *plague*—and the other *ten thousand nameless* disorders to which we are exposed?—When GOD commissions any of them to seize upon us—HE instructs them to inform us what we are,—and what we are hastening to be. So that by this means, the most regardless of ETERNITY and its FATHER, have happily been made sensible of their unfitness for HIS presence, and roused, tho' late, with greatest diligence to call upon him, that they perish not.

THE *prince* who has been most unpopular in his reign, may be far more happy *in that day*, than the *darling* of the people;—especially, if he was, to the best of his abilities, the promoter of their good; tho' his endeavours produced their aversion. The *blind*

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—the *dropſical*—the *aſthmatic*—the *conſumptive* and *paralytic*, will have no cauſe to lament hereafter, that they were ſtrangers to health, if they made ſuitable improvements of their viſitations. The man who ſhone in all the ſplendor of human magnificence, *reduced* to ſolicit the ſcanty pittance of a farthing, may have more abundant cauſe for conſolation than he, who lived in *luxury*, and died in *plenty*. The poor *prisoner*, denied the uſe of his uncovered limbs, may have more reaſon to thank GOD for his *confinement* and *diſtreſſes*, than he ever had to value himſelf upon his former *credit* and *liberty*. The *widow* and *orphan*, who mourn the loſs of the moſt indulgent *huſband*, and tender *father*, may reap more *future* happineſs from this *loſs*, than they otherwiſe would have fought after.

GOD, in *all* HIS diſpenſations is *merciful* and *gracious*. HE only prepares us by thoſe methods, to yield our neck to his “*Easy yoke*,” and our ſhoulders to his “*Light burden*.”—If when corrected, or *afflicted*—“*They obey and ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their days in proſperity, and their years in pleaſures—but if they obey not, they ſhall periſh by the ſword, and die without knowledge.*”—

ledge."—We may plainly discover from hence, that all our happiness lies in true *obedience* to GOD. Naturally we are *averse* to GOD, and to his ways; this natural aversion must be conquered, or we shall be for ever miserable. What frequent murmuring is discoverable from day to day, among the children of men! Can we suppose it possible, that such dispositions can taste any true satisfaction? The man that *opposes* GOD, is a *wicked* man: and his want of *peace* proves his character.—The *repining* man is the promoter of his torments, and will not fail, day by day, to add fuel to the fire which preys upon his vitals; nor can it be otherwise, seeing there are such constant occasions for murmuring to those unhappy spirits, in this state of vicissitude. The *afflictions* of GOD are to such men, what the *rod* of a parent is to a *froward, ungovernable, unthinking* child, *which*, tho' intended for his *good*, often hardens him in his *disobedience*, and exposes him to *severer* correction, 'till at last despairing of his amendment, the parent disinherits him. When the *afflictions* that happen to us, do not produce *obedience* and *resignation*, we have reason to tremble, lest GOD should give us up as incorrigible, to the hardness of our hearts.

HE who, in every dispensation, humbly confesses,—“ It is the LORD, let him do as seemeth him good,” is the man whose conduct is pleasing to GOD. He properly considers himself in a very *disordered* state, and receives those bitter potions as the only probable means of a cure. He knows that he has many mortified parts which must suffer amputation, to preserve his life; and tho’ the operation is painful, he chearfully submits to it, well knowing the skill and tenderneſs of his *fatherly phyſician*.—Thus to *submit* to GOD, is to *serve* GOD, and that in the beſt ſenſe; for he whose mind is brought into *obedience* to GOD, will ſo conduct himſelf, as in all things to be ſubſervient to HIS glory.

By *obeying* and *ſerving* GOD, we are not only to underſtand an external performance of certain religious *duties*, or a bare acknowledgment of HIS *wiſdom*, &c.—but alſo, to be *pitiful*, and tender hearted one toward another. Now how is it poſſible to diſcharge *this* duty in a right manner, unleſs we ourſelves have experienced ſomething of thoſe *afflictions* which we are to commiſerate and relieve?—Eſpecially in caſes of *conſcience*;—how ſhould we properly adviſe a *wounded ſpirit*,

spirit, and direct it to JESUS, if our own hearts have not been broken, and healed by his blood?—We here see the *necessity* of *affliction*, in order to a right discharge of our *duty*; and that the discharge of *such* duties will be attended in the end, with the most unspeakable happiness.

THERE can be no happiness without *obedience* to GOD, for every act of disobedience will sting us sharply, if our CONSCIENCES are tender.—We shall never be *effectually* reclaimed from this disobedience, till we are *afflicted*, for nothing but affliction can subdue our proud enmity. This was the case with DAVID,—“ Before I was *afflicted* I went astray.” GOD cannot obtain an audience with us, ’till we are brought into distress. Our natural impatience prevents us from giving a due attention to the voice and commands of GOD; therefore, when we are “ Bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, he sheweth us our work, and our transgressions that we have exceeded. He openeth also our ear to discipline, and commandeth that we return from iniquity.”

AFFLICTION is not only needful to bring us from the love and practice of *sin*, into all

inward and outward *obedience* to GOD;—but is also necessary to *keep* us *obedient* and *humble*. Accordingly, every true *Christian* will find, that the gospel cannot be embraced, and continued in without *affliction*, for not only *Ministers*, but “ *All* that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, shall suffer persecution,” of one kind or other; these things are permitted to happen to us, that we may “ Not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of GOD.”

WE are called upon to imitate HIS example, who was *meek* and *lowely*—who was A MAN OF SORROWS AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEFS.—We must not fancy, that when we commence HIS soldiers, that we are to be excused from *affliction*.—“ If we are free from affliction, then are we bastards and not sons.” No sooner do we determine to follow JESUS, than we ought to prepare for *outward* and *inward* conflicts. Sometimes an unkind world will ill use us,—at other seasons we shall be severely exercised by the *enemy* of our souls, who will continue to shoot his arrows at us, 'till we enter within the gates of the PEACEFUL city.—To these

these we may add, our remaining infirmities, for who among us can say,—“ *Which of you convinceth me of sin?*”—and *sin* in the least degree cannot fail to make a *pious* heart groan under the “ Grievous remembrance, and intolerable burden.”

OUR profession is to *suffer*, therefore, “ If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him give glory to GOD on this behalf.”—“ Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as tho’ some strange thing had happened unto you, but rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of CHRIST’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” These *afflictions* we must pass thro’, and the refining fire from heaven must purge, and purify our hearts from the evil of our nature. As gold is purified by the fire, and the gross alloy destroyed by the penetrating flame, even so must our hearts be baptized with the HOLY GHOST, and with fire,—the pure fire of the ALMIGHTY SPIRIT. This fire will *continue* to *burn* while any *dross* remains; and when this fire is withdrawn, the metal will be converted into its intended use,—i. e. When we cease to *suffer*, (for thro’ suffering

suffering we are made perfect) our souls will be fit for, and certainly will be taken to the fruition of GOD.

If the *Libertine* should be so curious as to inquire what a *Christian* gains by a religion that subjects him to *affliction*, I plainly answer HEAVEN.—*Heaven* both *here*, and *hereafter*.—For being sensible how much his stubborn nature needs such corrections, he submits with pleasure to the *rod*, knowing that he is *reconciled* to GOD thro' faith in CHRIST JESUS, this is matter of the highest consolation, 'midst every trouble; for however great the *afflictions* of his heart may be, yet this happy thought alleviates every pain;—an inexpressible serenity takes place, which greatly conduces to the happiness of the soul, by prevailing upon it calmly to *resign* to the dispensations of its *father* GOD. Then 'midst darkest paths of PROVIDENCE, and in the blackest temptations, a *peace* which passeth knowledge, reigns within his breast.

BUT we are not only *afflicted* to bring us into *obedience* to the laws of GOD, and *resignation* to HIS PROVIDENCE, but that mankind may see the *virtue* of religion.

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How greatly have many men admired, and been led successfully to imitate those, who supported under the greatest distresses with invincible fortitude. To behold a man *patient, recollected, and resigned* under great and heavy trials, strikes us with astonishment; especially when we knew the same person in another's calamity, never failed to discover the tenderest concern. This argues some supernatural support, which whilst we admire, we ardently wish to be possessed of. It furnishes us with far other notions of the *religion* of the HOLY JESUS, and places it much higher in our regard. Could we have beheld the blessed JESUS *insulted*, and led on to *crucifixion*, without discovering the value of *that something*, which enabled HIM to bear the greatest wrongs without *resentment*.—Could we have heard him in his last moments, *praying* for his *murderers*, and not have felt the warmest emotions of love to the ALMIGHTY *sufferer*? Could we have seen with *indifference* those *Christian* champions, the APOSTLES, submitting with all imaginable *meekness*, to the *cruelest* deaths, without wishing ourselves in *their* place?—No wonder that *religion* flourished most under the greatest persecutions, when its amiable, humble *professors* and *martyrs*, prayed
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for them that injured them, and did good to them that despitefully used them;—all who were not intoxicated with the rage of hell, must confess that *such a religion was from above*.—In short, “Affliction is the good man’s shining scene.” In *poverty* he betrays no *discontent*—in *pain*, no *peevishness*; because he recollects his obligations to JESUS, and is contented to take the cup that HE administers, however bitter, knowing “That all things work together for good to them that love GOD.”

SERMON

SEERMON VII.

JOE KKKV. 21.

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE
WORLD, FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE
PRESENT TIME, AND THE YEAR 1700.
BY J. K. K. V. 21.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
LONDON, 1700.

S E R M O N VII.

JOB xxxvi. 11.

IF THEY OBEY AND SERVE HIM, THEY SHALL SPEND THEIR DAYS IN PROSPERITY, AND THEIR YEARS IN PLEASURES.

WHAT are we to understand by the *prosperity* and *pleasures* of GOD's *obedient* children? *Prosperity* must not be confined to an increase of worldly goods. If we confine it to this meaning, we shall contradict the text; for few, *very few*, of GOD's most sincere children are *thus* prosperous. Their *prosperity* does not consist in abundance of riches—in adding field to field—and house to house—in rising in the esteem of the world—in being countenanced by great men—or sustaining honorable offices. Many who were *once* sincerely *obedient*, when they were *thus* prosperous, like JESHURUN grown fat, kicked against GOD—disowned HIS cause, and turned again unto folly. It is no mark
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of *grace* to grow *opulent*.—There are *few* whom GOD chuses to prosper in *this* manner; some exempt cases there are, we must allow, but their condition is far from being desirable. Like *wise* and *pious* AGUR, we should pray—" Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, —lest I be full and deny thee, and say who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my GOD in vain."

As to the *pleasures* of the *children* of GOD.—They do not consist of those things which the *world* calls pleasure. Their delight is not in high living—in faring sumptuously, and running the giddy circle of vanity.—They are strangers to those fashionable, and *unmanly* amusements.—They have discovered all these things to be lighter than vanity.—So that the *prosperity* and *pleasures* of GOD's children, do not bear any resemblance to those things, which we commonly mean by *prosperity* and *pleasure*. The LORD's people are a *tried* people; they suffer *pain*—*disappointment*—*poverty*—*contempt*—*reproach* and *injury*.

But to come to the point. In a *religious* sense, he only is a *prosperous* man whose heart is influenced by the *grace* of GOD, and freed
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from *sin* ;—for *sin* is the bane of our happiness, and when this evil, in its various appearances, begins to be destroyed, from that moment the *soul* begins to *prosper*, and enjoy true *pleasure*.

SIN is like a *factious* person, ever inflaming the minds of the people, and firing them up to rebellion under many specious pretences, 'till at last *anarchy* ensues with its inseparable attendants, *feuds* and *sedition*. By this means the *state* receives a blow it can never recover, 'till the *traitor* reaps the wages of his guilt ;—then every man returns to his allegiance ; and duty, and harmony being re-established among them, they spend their days in prosperity. SIN, like *this* CURSE of a nation, has stirred *us* up to rebellion. Our lawful *prince* being banished, we in like manner, endure the dread effects of *anarchy*.—Our disordered passions rage with mad tumult, and *peace* abandons our hearts, 'till this factious intruder is destroyed.

INDEED it cannot be supposed, that a kingdom can recover in a day, from the mischief it sustains by civil distractions ; yet while *duty* is regarded, every day contributes to the restoration of its former prosperity.—

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In like manner, the humble follower of JESUS, while he adheres to the instructions of his SOVEREIGN, shall *prosper* continually ; and tho' he does not instantaneously recover from *all* the injury which *sin* has done him, yet let him be of good courage ; while he *obediently* conducts himself towards GOD, he cannot but *prosper*, tho' his pleasure may not be always great. The very thing which *promotes* his *prosperity*, may *check* his *pleasure*.—For, “ No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby.” No wonder then, that they with PAUL should—“ Take pleasure in distresses for CHRIST's sake.” They consider that “ The LORD chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”—These marks afford them unspeakable *pleasure*, when they recollect *this is the way to the kingdom*. PAUL confirmed the souls of the disciples in *their afflictions*, by assuring them, that they *must thro' much* tribulation enter into the kingdom of GOD. The *more tribulation* we have, if it is sanctified to us, the *greater* our *prosperity*. Well may we “ Glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience experience, and experi-

ence hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST, which is given unto us."—The way of the *cross*, is the way to the *kingdom*—it is the *royal* road; and it is matter of great *pleasure* to *know* we are in that road.

IF a poor man was about to set out on a journey to another kingdom, or a distant city, to be put in possession of a very large estate, he would not be deterred from going thither, because he is informed the roads are very narrow, and that many difficulties will fall in his way. But having gained this information, if he should happen to meet with a fine country, and bold good roads, he would soon grow uneasy, lest he should be going from the place where he expects an ample compensation for his toils. The *Christian* is animated to oppose all difficulties from the same consideration; and will always be suspicious of having missed his road, when every thing is going on easy without and within him.—At *such* a season he will more especially examine himself, whether he is in the *faith*. No difficulties should discourage a true *believer*; he should consider "The same afflictions are accom-

accomplished in his brethren?" And always remember that " Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory."—He should console himself in HIM, " Who comforteth us in all our tribulation."

THEY shall spend their days in *prosperity*, and their years in *pleasures*. Whose condition is so *prosperous* and *pleasant* as his, who has " *Peace with GOD, thro' our LORD JESUS CHRIST*"—whose CONSCIENCE does *not condemn* him?—Being *spiritually* minded, he enjoys *life and peace*: and that more *abundantly*, as he grows in the *grace of JESUS*.—His *peace passeth all understanding*.—And the stronger he grows in *faith and holiness*, the stronger his *assurance*, that THE EVERLASTING ARMS are spread *around and beneath* him.—He serves the LORD with all *humility* of mind, and experiences that in serving HIM there is *great reward*. The ways of GOD, to him, are ways of *pleasantness*, and all his paths are *peace*.—" *Peace is within his walls, and prosperity within his dwellings.*" " *Tho' he lives in obscurity, and poverty and sickness* press him fore, yet having CHRIST, he possesses all things. He is concerned

for nothing so much, as to know *more* of the *lovely* CHIEF of all his joys: and wherein he fails to *do* the will of GOD, he rejoices to suffer it. Is not such a man spending his days in the *best* prosperity, who is rich towards GOD — and his years in the sublimest *pleasure*, who knows that CHRIST is gone to *prepare* a place for him, where *sorrow* and *sighing* shall flee away *for ever*—who is sensible that the LORD crowneth him with loving kindness, and tender mercies?—Is not he a *prosperous* man, whose heart *was* enmity against GOD, but *is* now the temple of the HOLY GHOST—whose mind *was* carnal, but *is* now spiritual—*once* devilish, but *now* godly—*once* repining, but *now* thankful—*once* the seat of guilty fear, but *now* of heavenly peace—who *once* had GOD for his enemy, but *is* now his friend—in short, whose heart *was* hell, but *now* *is* heaven. Who *has* CHRIST for his friend and safeguard—a *friend* that blesses him in the city, and in the field—in his going out, and coming in—in his lying down and rising up—in sickness and in health—in prosperity and adversity—in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—and will be his great reward *for ever*?—Who then, would not *suffer*

fer with CHRIST to *reign* with HIM? O, the power of *true religion*!—How happy that man, who *lives* and *dies* in conformity to its *blessed* precepts!

HERE, can I help dropping a tear of *pity* upon you, who are *not* rich toward GOD, and by that means *poor* in your *abundance*,—upon you, whose *afflictions* have *hardened* your hearts, instead of *softening* them?—How great a *curse* is your *prosperity*, who are *not* obedient to GOD. “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee; thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, that faith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground?—Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and tho’ thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD!”

YOU have heard of the *prosperity* and happiness of the *obedient*.—You must now harken to the *curses*, which GOD denounces against the *disobedient*. “Curst shalt thou be in the city, and in the field.—Curst shall be thy basket, and thy store.—Curst shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.—Curst shalt thou be when thou comest in, and when thou goest out”.

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But to acquaint thyself more fully with these mischiefs, which thou art exposed to, see the following verses of the same chapter.*

I HOPE you will be brought to with the state of LAZARUS your own. Tho' he was *macerated* by hunger—*destitute* of friends—*covered* with sores—*reduced* to beggary, and at last died *neglected* on a dunghill.—Yet his death was *honorable*, and his life 'midst these distresses was doubtless happy. His misfortunes taught him *this* was not his rest;—and induced him to improve his uncertain moments in that manner, which thro' the *mercy* of JESUS, secured him in the *favor* of the ALMIGHTY. Now this mortal life is ended with him, what injury does he sustain by all these seeming evils?—Our situation here will avail us nothing hereafter; if we *die* in our *grandeur* will be no atonement for them; and if we *die* in the *faith*, our *poverty* and *wretchedness* will be no hindrance to our happiness.

LET us commit ourselves into HIS hands, and rejoice to endure the greatest *affliction* here, rather than *suffer* for our *sins* hereafter.

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Here *afflictions*, if they have their perfect work, will make us *obedient* and *happy*;— they shall follow us *no* farther than the *grave*; for there the *weary* are at *rest*, and *one* glance of the *beatific vision* shall banish their remembrance FOR EVER.

SERMON

S E R M O N V I I I .

1 P E T E R i v . 7 .

THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND.

I HAVE no intention, by fixing upon this subject, to quench that happiness which glows within your bosoms, occasioned by your late commemoration of the wonderful *birth* of GOD, or the accession of the present year.* I only mean to confirm the joys of the truly *pious* on the one hand, and timely detect the false happiness of the *formalist* on the other, by exciting your regard to that most solemn season, when the *herald* ANGEL shall swear by HIM that *liveth*, TIME SHALL BE NO MORE! —At which period, we shall be fully convinced of the reality, or illusion of our happiness.

A CONSCIOUSNESS of your being mortal, and consequently that “The end of all things is at hand” with *you*, is a very sufficient reason

* Preached on New Year's-Day.

son for your due attention to this address ; in which, I intend, by GOD's permission,

To consider in *what sense* " The end of all things is at hand."

What are the things that shall end ere long.

And in contradistinction to this, *what are the things which shall never end.*

And then close with a few apposite reflections.

WE are to consider in *what sense*, " The end of all things is at hand." —

SOME persons ridiculously, and to their ruin, 'tis greatly to be feared, have, thro' a wrong conception of our APOSTLE's meaning, supposed the *sacred oracles* not to be depended on, inasmuch as *this* prediction is not yet fulfilled ; apprehending that when the APOSTLE declared the awful truth in the text, he positively alluded to the *destruction* of *universal* nature.—But I beg leave to differ, as I suppose it was brought as an argument to persuade the CHRISTIAN *Jews* to the strictest practise of piety, seeing *such* tremendous things were

were about to fall upon their CHURCH and *state*; the destruction of *Jerusalem* being very near. And undoubtedly he meant to lead them farther, by directing their regard to that more awful season, which will command their attendance at the *judgment* seat of CHRIST, when they will be obliged to enter upon an *unchangeable* state, of *happiness* or *misery*, agreeable to their conduct in the present evil world.—But should we allow those *self-deceivers* the point—that St. PETER had an *immediate* eye to the *dissolution* of nature—what then?—Will this mistake be a sufficient warrant for their presumption?—or will they have any just reason to draw the *unnatural* conclusion, that they shall continue in the *unchanged* possession of the things that surround them?—Does not experience assure us that we are *mortal*? Have we not *daily* instances of persons being divested of all temporal things, by the arrest of DEATH.

WHENEVER DEATH lays his cold hand upon us, the things of this life will as effectually *end* with us, as tho' we perished in the universal ruins of a *burning world*. Since we must all *die*!—Since we have no reason to imagine, that the line of our existence will be stretched beyond the *ordinary* limits of

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life, may we not conclude that “ the end of all things is at hand ? ”—If ten thousand years should be added to our existence, compare it with ETERNITY and our end is *at hand* ! How much nearer then, since we are confined within the pale of *threescore years and ten* ! But if we consider how improbable it is, that we shall reach even this period, and how very *few* there are who do arrive at it ;—how many *accidents*, as they are called, which we have to run thro’ in our way to such an age, it must be confessed, that “ The end of all things is at hand.”

ANOTHER moment, ’tis not unlikely, may transport us from this fleeting world, and fix us in another *for ever* ! However *long* our *lives* may be, our *death* is certain ; tho’ the hour is not fully known. If we reflect upon the *diseases* which are *latent* in our complexion, and the many circumstances that hourly concur to call them forth in their formidable operations—if we call to our remembrance the *numbers* which have fallen victims to *unsuspected* disorders, even in the *earlier stages* of life—if we consider how often the means used to *preserve* life, becomes its *bane*—how frequently, and how easily, the most robust persons are subdued, it must be admitted that

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“The end of all things is at hand.” For the farther illustration of this point, I will refer you to the *sacred oracles*.

JACOB in his reply to PHARAOH's interrogation, concerning his age, declares that tho' he had attained to *one hundred and thirty years*, his days were both *few* and *evil*. DAVID upon another occasion, confessed to JONATHAN—“There is but a step between me and death. The same person declares—“Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” JOB under a conviction of his frailty, among the many striking metaphors he uses to express the shortness and uncertainty of life has these—“Our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.—“Our days are swifter than a post, they fly away; they are passed away as the swift ships, and as the eagle hasteth to her prey.” St. JAMES assures us, that “Our life is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

WE will now consider what the *things are*, that shall *end* ere long. The text assures us in general terms, “The end of all things is at hand.”—But to be particular—The *business* of the *world* shall end. We

see mankind pursuing the various employments of life, with the same eagerness and assiduity, as tho' they were to continue in the cares of *trade* for ever ;—or, as if the riches, which may be accumulated by it, would be contributory to their happiness in another world.—The attention which is paid to the *ledger* the *journal*, &c. seems to indicate that *they* contain the *words* of *life*. But how dreadful will the mistake be to those, who consult them as *such* oracles. The season is *swiftly* advancing, when *Ophir* and her highly valued, and supposed, imperishable treasures, shall be consumed by that flame, which shall devour all created things *below*. *India* and her wealth, shall, ere long, cease to attract the attention of the sedulous merchant.—“ They that trust in their wealth, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to GOD a ransom for him.”

WHEN DEATH arrives, the *conquests* of a CÆSAR *end*, and a period is put to the military achievements of the ambitious general.—The *groans* of expiring victims shall no more ravish his transported heart ; nor the *submission* of royal captives elate his haughty mind.—The *smoak* of desolated cities shall afford him no farther cause of triumph—
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The *discipline* and *bravery* of his troops, shall then leave him no room for confidence in defence, or success in the fierce attack.—The shrill trumpet and the warlike drum, shall no more call forth the soldier to his glory, nor inflame his soul with fierce designs of war.—Thus when the *universal* CONQUEROR gets himself the victory o'er the dreaded *hero*; his arms are useless, and his power disregarded; his prisoners triumph o'er their conqueror, and his troops can no longer afford him their assistance;—with all his trophies “ He shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover him.” So true is it—“ No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war.”

WHEN DEATH advances, *palaces* can no longer please, or gratify the royal vanquished mortal! When the *fell ravager* seizes the dissolving frame of languid nature, the fairest prospect—the most agreeable situation—the furniture of the palace, and all its ornaments—the grandeur and extent of the royal gardens—the variety of their productions—the stately walks of cedar—the bowers of jessamine and myrtle—the ten thousand beauties of the flowery world, whose odours and tincts put forth in strength and beauty, seem

to outvie each other;—these all loose their excellling qualities—no more they add pleasure to the eye—or comfort to the mind—their worth is ended, and their dying lord leaves them in the hands of some *new* possessor, whilst he makes the awful transit to another world.—“ So passeth away the glory of this world.” At such a season we may be reminded of our mistake, when we declared they were GODS, seeing they die like men.—“ The mighty are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all others, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.”

WHEN DEATH comes, there is an end of all the pleasures of life as they are, *falsely*, called. Then amusements lose their wanted, and wished-for power of pleasing. The splendors of an assembly—the entertainments of the theatre, and the parade of dress end here. Then the activity and grace of the most admired performers—the wit of the most ingenious drama loses its excellence, and leaves the dying admirer destitute of that supreme delight he hoped for in it.—“ They spend their days in mirth, and in a moment go down to the grave.”

WHEN

WHEN DEATH makes his dreaded, and gaitful appearance, the rose buds of beauty wither—the most engaging person is striped of its former admired accomplishments!—The eye which lately darted death to the enraptured beholder, is closed in darkness!—The lip on which hung the art of soft persuasion, is no longer attended by humble suplicants, who were accustomed to wait its decrees for their happiness, or misery.—No.—’Tis now impressed with paleness, and sealed up in silence!—All supposed perfection proves but varnish, and lies deserted by the most passionate admirers. The rich productions of *Persia*—silks and embroidery—the sparkling diamond, and the blushing ruby, are now exchanged for the mean attire of a *woollen shroud*, or linen winding sheet.—Alas! how looks the *fair* in these coarse robes of death. O, what a change since yesterday!—Snatched from the ornamented and extensive mansion, and crouded within the narrow compass of a plain wooden box!—hurried from the full enjoyment of worldly pomp, into the damp regions of the gloomy grave.—How soon, how effectually are all these things ended? “Mortal men dwell in houses of clay, their foundation is in the dust, they are crushed before the moth.”—

“Thou

“Thou carriest them away as with a flood, they are as a sleep in the morning; they are like the grass that groweth up, in the morning it flourisheth, in the evening it is cut down dried up and withered.”

WHEN DEATH strikes the tremendous blow, the delights of the drunkard, and the pleasures of the profane shall end.—The debauchee shall enjoy his lust no more. A period will then be put to all the lying vanities of life;—*evil* shall no more wear the *aspect* of *goodness*: the mask shall be plucked from her rueful countenance, and she shall be exposed to her deluded converts in her native hue;—unable any longer to *stifle* the *convictions* of a *guilty* mind—or chase *inquietude* from the awakened CONSCIENCE—an *inquietude*—which if attended to, had been productive of a *lasting peace*. But now the season is *past*—’tis over!—’tis now *too late*!—too late FOR EVER!

CONSIDER *sinner*—when life ends, all *means of grace* end with it, and the *hope of glory*. Now GOD warns thee of thy danger, urges thee to repentance, and offers thee his assistance for the performance of it. Now HE bids thee pray, and graciously offers thee the

the aid of his HOLY SPIRIT to help thy infirmity. Now HE bids thee be *holy*, and tenders thee his grace that thou mayest be so. Now HE invites thee to be happy.—HE waits to be gracious—HE offers thee his *blood* to cleanse thee, and his *body* that thou mayest eat it and be strong. Now HIS word is preached to encourage thee, and HE in heaven prays for thee!—What a waste of love is here!—How lavish is GOD of his goodness!—O, goodness infinite!—O, grace immense! Think on it sinner—and *blush* to think how long thou hast neglected it—consider how soon these overtures of mercy may end—they must end when DEATH shifts the scene, and that may be *this hour*. Remember “There is no work nor device, nor knowledge in the grave whither thou goest.”—“They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy (GOD’s) truth.” Thus all things end with the wicked—the pleasures of this world, and the vain expectations of happiness in the other.—“When the wicked man dieth, his expectation perisheth.”—“I saw the wicked buried, they were forgotten.”

How many unthinking creatures involve themselves in *eternal* ruin, by a slavish obedience to the dictates of *ambition*. The hopes
of

of perpetuating their memory, frequently diverts them from the momentous concerns of an *approaching* ETERNITY ;—and yet how fruitless are their endeavors in general ! Few are placed in a sphere that will attract the admiration of mankind, or render themselves *illustriously* memorable : some indeed become popular by *irreligion* and *audacity* ;—instances might be given, but what does their success amount to ?—They are *infamous* in the esteem of *good men* while they live, and perhaps a few years after their demise, they are now and then recollected as singular instances of pride and profaneness, and are pointed out as a *warning* to others.

Thus they continue till their monumental inscription is obliterated, or others burst the embryo of perdition, as *wanton* and *infamous* as themselves ; they are then buried in oblivion 'till the *great day*, when their infamy shall be made notorious to men and angels. A virtuous mind will justly disdain the honors of a monument, and seek after happiness more permanent than that of being registered in the annals of succeeding generations.

“ THE end of all things is at hand ”—foul-rendering truth “ To those, who have no God ”—to those, who place all their happiness in
the

the present evil world.—Now they have recourse to a thousand things to divert melancholy, or banish the sense of pain and disorder; but ere long these *expedients* shall *fail*—cordials shall *lose* their *virtue*, and medicines their efficacy—amusements shall cease to be *amusive*, and the solace of friendship no longer retain its *vivifying* power—the officiousness of *parental* fondness shall end e're long, and leave the tortured wretch *abandoned* to DESPAIR!

MANY derive pleasure from the *recollection* of past enjoyments, but the infirmity of nature may *enervate* the memory, and *end* the delusion;—the dotage of old age, may prevent the soul from a discovery of its danger, and for a *short* season enroll it in a kind of *happy* stupor, but DEATH will end the *false* peace, and rouse the soul from the *pleasing* lethargy, to a *painful* consciousness of its misery and ruin. We might illustrate this solemn position by a variety of things, but let what has been said suffice, for the irreligious *sons of Belial*, and the *vain daughters* of gaiety and *idle mirth*.

ATTEND, O, ye *pious* and *penitent*, to the consideration of a few matters, which may be productive of much *real* pleasure and *solid*
good

6 good.—The *end* of all your *troubles* is at hand. Ye shall ere long put off the clog of mortality, and with holy confidence commit your bodies to the silent grave, 'till the *herald* ANGEL declares thro' universal nature—"Time shall be no more." These bodies, whose infirmities have so often prevented you from, or interrupted you in the discharge of your duty, religious and civil, shall, in a *short* season, be *no more* exposed to the many diseases which now attend you. Let *hope* grow stronger, and *faith* increase, for your *redemption* draweth nigh. When a few more days are passed away, ye shall be delivered from the censures and reproaches of an unkind world—from the ill-treatment and abuses of the wicked;—and not from these only, but from your *great adversary*, who has lain so many pleasing snares to entrap your souls, and cunning schemes to seduce you from your *gracious* REDEEMER. When the *welcome* messenger arrives, a final period will be put to all inquietude of mind.—*Sin* shall no more trouble you—ye shall no longer be exposed to the fierce assaults of that enemy, who so often comes upon you as a mighty torrent—e're long your *doubts* shall *eternally* vanish, and leave you happy in the full enjoyment of your souls delight.—O,
happy

happy season, in the which we shall be delivered from *all sin*, and placed in a state *incapable* of folly ;—Thrice *happy* moment, which shall end our trials, and free us from every possibility of dishonoring the FRIEND of *sinners*, by doubting his *power*, or questioning his *love* ! When pale disease stretches you on the bed of dissolution, *exult*—exult in the prospect of the *wished* for hour, in the which, by the merits of JESUS, ye shall be transported to endless and inconceivable happiness.

THE next point to be considered is, what *are the things* which shall *never* end.

THE word of GOD assures us in the plainest manner, and our CONSCIENCES bear testimony to the truth of it, that our *souls* are *immortal*, and must *live* or *die* ETERNALLY ! Rewards and punishments are due to us for our *present* conduct, and both the former and the latter, when bestowed, will be irrevocable. We will consider this more largely. The world we travel thro' is our state of *trial*, and every immortal rational creature that enters upon it is a *probationer* for another, and a better world. The world we are *designed* for is of such purity, that we cannot be admitted with any thing *sinful* or *impure*;

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GOD

GOD has therefore taken care to make men sensible of this by the *preaching* of HIS *word*, and where that blessed sound is not heard, that *consciousness* of good and evil which is implanted in *every* bosom, gives *every* man a due alarm, and fain would rouse him to escape the wrath to come:—so that no man, whether *Pagan* or CHRISTIAN, will have ignorance to plead in the *great day*. GOD has taken care to provide for our information in these weighty matters—such as—we are *sinful* and need to be *cleansed*—*dying*, and hastening to an *eternal* state—HE has occasioned the *necessity* of *repentance* to be declared, and the *nature* of it—HE has given us the happy *assurance* of HIS *love* and protection, consequent upon our *leaving* our sins and *crying* to HIM for mercy. On the contrary HE has assured us—if we *die* sinners, unchanged, unpardoned, where HE is, we *cannot* come. Now if men live and die in the *sober*, *willful* neglect of these things after the most *solemn* warning, is it not reasonable to conclude that such a *contempt* of GOD, such an *abuse* of HIS offered mercy really deserves the threatened punishment? Is it likely that those wretched creatures who live and die in the *neglect* of it, if they should live *ten thousand years*—is it likely I say, that they would turn from the error
of

of their way? Might we not expect that the indulgence of such an age, would be attended with *greater* hardness of heart, and contempt of GOD's word and commandment, and consequently be productive of greater punishment hereafter?

As this is our state of *trial*, as it is in *this life only* we can be candidates for HEAVEN, is it reasonable to think after our miscarriage *here*, we shall *regain* it *hereafter*?—To admit of this, requires credence in a *purgatory*;—or that the torments of the damned are not *eternal*; both of which are flatly contradictory to the word of GOD, as we shall sufficiently prove. *Hell* is acknowledged to be an *unholy*, impure place.—Is it probable then, that any who may be so dreadfully unhappy as to fall into that place of misery, will be made more pure?—And if they retain their impurity, what other state will they be fit for? But will they not be contracting *more* filth, and so expose themselves to *continued* punishment?—Thus *reason* argues for the ETERNITY of *hell*. We might urge the infinite evil of *sin* in a more copious manner, but as time will not admit of it, we shall urge that which with *Christians* should have more abundant weight—the *oracles* of GOD.

I MUST now solicit your forgiveness for this digression, which I thought a necessary preparative to the dreadful truths I have yet to treat of, and which might have been less regarded, unless proved reasonable and certain.

OUR blessed LORD, desirous of our happiness, shews us the infinite misery of losing HEAVEN, by informing us, the *damned* are involved in that “ Lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ; but the smোক of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of GOD, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and shall have no rest day nor night.”—“ Who can dwell with everlasting burnings !” Reflect upon that dismal state, and take a calm survey of the horrid prospect.—*Dwell* with devouring fire !—How terrible—how insupportable—the very thought ! What misery and anguish do we endure by boiling water, or burning iron falling upon us !—it renders our days comfortless, and our nights tedious and painful ;—neither the nourishment we receive, or the pleasures we court to divert us, yield us any satisfaction. If mat-
ters

ters run to such a length when there are hopes of a recovery, and under the advantage of every means that is likely to promote our ease—how unspeakably dreadful must those pains be, which can never be mitigated by the power of medicine, if medicines could be had, or eased for a small moment by the hopes of a respite! We know how dreadful it is to have a raging fever upon us, and unabated thirst; life is rendered truly uncomfortable under the burning influence of such disorders, which create in us desires that cannot with safety be gratified;—how desirable is it in such a case, to be plunged in some river, where at once we might cool our burning limbs, and quaff down large draughts to abate our thirst. If the disorder is terrible under all the cooling things that are administered, and amid all the officious tenderness of relatives and friends, can thought reach the more intolerable fever of ETERNAL fire, and EVERLASTING thirst—where one drop of water will be groaned for—but *in vain*—where no *physician* shall, or can, afford his kind prescriptions—no *cooling* drinks be administered—but the poor sinner destitute of all help, has the misery of having his pains aggravated by the *repeated* and *incessant* tortures of *unrelenting* devils, who make his *pain* their

L 3. *pleasure.*

pleasure and wanton in his torments!--And after having counted in tedious anguish, MILLIONS of *unhappy ages*, to see the flame grow *stronger*, and the means of torment *increasing* upon him—how must it wound his burning tortured *soul*!--To be conscious too that this must be his case FOR EVER—must add *fresh* horror to his torments, and sink him *deeper* in the sulphureous regions of black *despair*!

O SINNERS think, and tremble while you think, how unhappy beyond all comparison must be the wretch, who sinks under the *indignation* of an *injured* GOD!--A GOD who offered him HIS *friendship* in the person of the *lowly, lovely* JESUS!--See, see him now cut off the enjoyment of HIM whom devout *arch-angels* worship—remote *for ever* from HIS smiles—an *eternal* stranger to the rapturous sonnets angels sing to the great author of their happiness!--Ah poor unhappy *ghost*—how great thy misery—excluded these enjoyments—compelled to associate with damned spirits and tormenting devils, without the most distant prospect of relief—Alas, how dreadful!--Not only to *lose* HEAVEN—not merely to *suffer Hell*—but to have the loss of the *one* rendering the *other* more intolerable.—Not only to have thy eyes refused the sight of
JESUS

JESUS in his *glory*—but to have them forced open against thy will, to view the horrors of ETERNAL *fire*—the *burning* chains of *Tophet*—to descry the hellish and unrelenting countenances of triumphant devils—to behold the distorted countenances of tortured *spirits*—to have thy ears opened to their deep fetched *groans*, and hideous *yellings*—to be upbraided with thy folly, and punished for thy pride in that sad state of misery, thro' *hopeless* AGES of *despair* !—SIRS, how can ye endure the gashly, chilling thought !—What just abhorrence should it create in us against *those evils*, that lead us to this place of dire perdition !—O may the *smoak* of *their burning* drive us closer to HIM, “ Who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification,” that we may escape these miseries, “ The bitter pains of everlasting death.”

S E R M O N

S E R M O N IX.

1 PETER iv. 7.

THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND.

TO relieve the gloom and horror our minds have been over cast with by those awful considerations, we were lately employed in, let us now survey those most happy mansions of the new *Jerusalem*, where peace for ever dwells.

THRICE happy—for ever blessed inhabitants, whose pleasures are as ample as their *author* is infinite and *eternal*!—" There they are before the throne of GOD, and serve him day and night, in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

eyes." Ye blessed spirits how compleat your happiness! Ye enjoy in HIS presence fulness of joy, and from HIS right hand ye derive pleasures for evermore! *Everlastingly* secured from all disease and sickness, and all iniquity forgiven—how must your glad hearts exult in the refulgent prospect of *increasing* felicity!—The holy raptures that enkindle your sacred bosoms, are ever leading you to the sublimest expressions of superior gratitude and love! O; blessed employment!—Thrice happy in itself—ininitely more happy, since requited by the approving smiles of JESUS. Ye are lodged in *perfect* security—exposed no more to the assaults of *Satan*, nor liable to lose the sacred transport! Your treasures are inexhaustible—subject to no decay! No painful vigilance breaks your quiet—no apprehensions of surprize molest your rest!—Ye are protected in the celestial citadel, where *no thieves* can *break through*; and your *treasures* lodged in the bank of *Heaven*, where neither moth nor rust *corrupt*! O, ye highly favored of the LORD—employ your all in praise of your indulgent *benefactor*!—since ETERNAL youth is yours, ye cannot fear those fatigues and languors once occasioned by excess of praise.—Shout then the honors of the HOLY
JESUS,

JESUS, and let the concave of the vast expanse
re-echo in symphonious numbers the glory of
 HIS name!—Celestial transport—solemn ex-
 tacy!

YE countless myriads, who jointly wor-
 ship in those realms of joy, how must HIS
presence, whose vesture proclaims HIM, KING
 OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!—How
 must HIS *presence* animate your enraptured
 bosoms, and encourage you in the ceaseless
 employment of perfect adoration! Well
 may ye hail HIM—HOLY, HOLY, HOLY,
 LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!

Your acclamations glow with more intense
 ardor, when ye turn reflexive on the world
just ended, and consider the great tribulation
 he brought you thro', who made your robes
 white in his all cleansing blood! Now ye
 enjoy perpetual converse with your angelic
 watchful guardians, who deputed by their
 LORD, protected you in midnight flum-
 bers from invading harm, or by intuition
 led you uninjured from obtruding vice. Now
 sorrow and sighing are for ever fled!—The
 sickly *Moon* shall no more shed her baleful
 influence—nor the meridian Sun scorch
 with vertic rays;—but, “ The LORD shall
 be

be unto you everlasting light, and your GOD your glory!"—Ye shall enjoy HIS loving kindness, which is better than life, in unmolested joy.—Your temples are crowned with unfading palm—how greatly recompensed for the short campaign of life!—Once ye walked by *faith*, but now by *sight*—once ye saw your LOVELY CHIEF, as thro' a glass *darkly*, but now *face to face*—ye see HIM *as he is*! Ah happy, inconceivably happy souls! What endless glories do ye possess! How are ye refreshed by that "Pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD, and of the Lamb!"—No *fabled* ELYSIUM yours—all that surrounds you is *substantial* bliss!

BUT where are *we*!—Ah! far beneath those realms of everlasting felicity—as yet sojourners in a desert world! Inspired by these extatic joys, may we derive fresh vigour—and with alacrity press forward, 'till the *Prince* of that thrice happy land calls us, *even us*, to be partakers of those sacred pleasures, which shall endure while GOD continues to be JEHOVAH!

But we must hasten to those *reflections*.

THE

THE end of all things is at hand! May the sacred truth find constant entertainment in my heart!—On every occasion, that is likely to alienate my affections from things above, may it remind me of my *latter end*, and urge me to apply my heart unto *wisdom*!

TIME is the blessed season HEAVEN has granted us to prepare for *eternity*. How careful should we be to husband every particle of it to the best advantage, since such weighty things are dependent on our *improvement*, or *neglect* of it!—But of this *short, shortening, and uncertain* season, how great a part has fled *unnoticed, unimproved*! Is it true that every *additional* hour *diminishes* our lives, and hurries us irresistibly to the world unknown?—Alas! how many thousand *hours*—how many *months* and *years* are fled without improvement—*fled, to return no more*! The *sun* has once more compleated his annual career—the vernal *Spring*—the smiling *Summer*—the bounteous *Autumn* and the chearless *Winter*, have once more compleated their successive revolutions, and read a useful lecture to reflective minds.—These are the *last*, perhaps, that shall glide

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over

over my head while unnumbered with the dead.

ANOTHER year—what of it?—Another year of my *probation* is *past*. The *last* will come e're long, and put an *everlasting* end to every fruitless expectation. Another year ALMIGHTY *goodness* has brought me safely through—but horrid ingrate that I am, how have I neglected the *glory* of GOD—the *good* of my soul, and the welfare of my fellow creatures!

LET me seriously enter my bosom, and minutely examine the records of CONSCIENCE.—How insupportable the black review!—What a train of *sabbaths* are fled, and their sacred duties *unperformed*—how many of these days of THE LORD OF HOSTS have I squandered in *unmeaning* services, and *solemn mockery*—how many *sermons* have been addressed to my hearing, reminding me of TIME'S *decay*, and urging me to pursue the important business of an opening ETERNITY!—Have they answered their design? Week after *week* rolled on, and left me still about to enter upon the business yet unbegun—month after *month* advanced upon me, and left me *resolute* in *new* resolves;—but hurried on by the impetuous torrent of sensuality,

lity, I only wandered farther from the happy *centre*. What useless visits have I made to the *theatre*—the *assembly*—the *tavern*, or the *ale-house*! How *seldom* have I entered my *closet* in the *last year*—how *short* and *fruitless* was the time when in it! What hours have been chased away by *impertinent* inquiries or *ridiculous* converse, in which the most weighty matters were *never* introduced!—Alas! my head turns giddy at the black account the *departed year* has *lodged* against me in the *court of Heaven*!

WHEN I inclined to *study*, or *meditation*, what were the *subjects* I fixed on, or the *books* I consulted?—*News-papers* and *plays*, *romances* and *travels* would seldom suffer the BIBLE to be entertained five minutes together; and this—O blush to think it, scarce *once* a week—*politics* and *philosophy*, *trade* and *history* superseded, DEATH and JUDGEMENT, HEAVEN and HELL; and left me more a *fool* than when the year began. How great a part of so short a life is *lost*.—How many hours are fled from the *small* number HEAVEN assigned me for the *best* purposes—they fled while stupified in slumber, or diverted by the *antics* of *fancy* on an idle brain—yes they are gone and will return *no more*!—O, let

me hide me from my *guilty-self* in some deep dug dungeon—or to be more effectual in this *self-desertion*, forsake me *memory*!—But what will this avail?—The hour of *reckoning* is at hand.—Ready or *unprepared*, the the *Judge* will have an hearing *soon*!

Is this the language of any heart in this assembly?—If so thy case deserves the greatest *pity* and the best *advice*. E're time is fled for ever, be advised—be sincere and diligent, and you yet may live : go first and mourn your sad condition at HIS throne, who *bled* for *sinners*—who *died* for *you*; *sigh* out thy sinful soul in sobs of penitence before HIM, and vehemently cry—“ O LORD have mercy on a wretch whose crime is murder, of himself and *thee*—who, perhaps, has not *one* short hour to live—Have mercy on me thou *son* of DAVID!”—have mercy on me, as thou hadst on *him*, who in the *eleventh* hour *implored* and *obtained* thy grace. Go poor polluted sinner, and doubly diligent improve each coming hour;—be it thy first great care to seek for *faith*, and rest not 'till thou hast it; that sacred thing will make a SAVIOUR *thine*.—Go and redeem each moment by tears and prayers, and pious industry.—Be *speedy*, DEATH is just at hand!

THE

THE end of all things is at hand. How many are they ended with already!—Look back from ADAM.—But why so far?—Let the *last* year suffice. How frequently was I alarmed by doleful *passing-bells*—every day what troops have passed before me to the *land unknown*!—Survey that *populous* solitary city of the dead *—what *numbers* there have fixed their dwelling in the *last* twelve months!—What numbers of my *gay* acquaintance snatched off in *health*—in *pleasure*, when *least* suspicious of their end! Some dear *relations* too are mouldering there;—and if memory fails not, there are some, who urged by business or allured by pleasure, fell sick from home far distant, and breathed their last with *strangers*; who not knowing the faltering accents of the *dying wish*, leave the request *undone*;—no tears bedewed the grave—no sighs were heard when the inanimate body was intombed in its *original*.—No groan of friendship, when the priest pronounced with solemn accent—*dust to dust*, and the hollow murmur of injected clay, in reverberations more expressive than all the language of “the babbling earth,” *closed* the sad scene, and told the gaping crowd his

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course

* A neighbouring Church-yard.

course was *finished* and his *trial past*. There fresh hillocks are raised over those, who lately—but a *few months* or *weeks* since could review as I can, perhaps with far more profit, that house appointed *for all living*! The bell *next* rung, may tell the neighbours I'm no more—the grave *to-morrow* may be my gloomy lodgement—there I must part with *all*, and rot in darkness 'till the “*great day of dread, decision, and despair*!” How then are my accounts?—Am I *prepared to meet* my GOD?—This is a *weighty* question, and demands a *serious* answer!—Am I *fit to die*—to launch into the *world of spirits*—to meet the *Judge of quick and dead*—to hear the *decisive sentence* passed *unshocked*!—if not—great GOD, how *wretched* is my condition!—every hour hurries me nearer to my *final doom*!

O ETERNITY—*Eternity*! How *swiftly* dost thou advance---how *greedily* dost thou devour the *fleeting* moments of *uncertain* life! O let us strictly examine ourselves.---Am I interested in the *merits* and *blood* of JESUS---have I sincerely *repented* of my *sins*---do I *mourn* for them *now*---is JESUS my *Saviour*---can I call HIM *mine* by the power of a *living faith*---can I *meditate* on DEATH with *delightful solemnity*, and reflect on judgment with
unshaken

unshaken confidence---in a word, am I *living* for ETERNITY ?

COULD we constantly draw to our *mental* view the solemnity of a *dying* hour, and that tremendous *day* approaching---how differently should we be employed !---The *closet* would be more frequently visited, and the *throne* of *grace* more warmly supplicated. Did we but consider---“ All these things shall be dissolved”---how base would every bauble of life appear !---Every pleasing delusion of *fancied* happiness, compared to those divine *realities* that shall shortly be revealed, would be truly contemptible. How careful should we be to improve every particle of *time* to the *best* purposes, if we *frequently* explored the secrets of vast ETERNITY---how sickly would every worldly amusement be, if we did but contemplate the superior pleasures of *inexhausted* glory---how *sincere* would every word and action be, did we but consider GOD *omniscient*, *omnipresent*---how *able* should we be to oppose, with true magnanimity, *those* who war against GOD and our souls, if we *acted* under the *influence* of HIS HOLY SPIRIT---how *enraptured* would our apprehensions of a *speedy* dissolution be, if we daily walked with GOD !---But, by *neglecting* these

these things, we render our lives *miserable*, and the thoughts of death *intolerable* !

SEEING how necessary to our happiness the *improvement* of our *time* is, suffer me to lay before you a few rules, worthy of your observance, for the regulation of your conduct.

IT is highly necessary wherever we are, or however employed, to consider we are going down the *stream* of TIME into the *peaceful* ocean—or *tempestuous* seas of *Eternity* ! Being thus seasonably reminded of our *mortality*, it is probable we shall be more assiduous in matters of such importance.

LET the *sacred scripture* be our constant teacher and director, by it let us examine whether we have that *living faith* that constitutes us true *believers*, and its genuine fruits an *uniform* obedience. In this examination we should be particular at all times, but more especially *every morning* and *evening*.—In the morning when we awake we should collect our thoughts, and fix them all on GOD ; and after having poured out our hearts in grateful praises, we should implore the *guidance* of HIS HOLY SPIRIT through the day ;—

day ;—before we quit our chamber the *bible* should be consulted, this will store our minds with those *promises* GOD has made to us, and afford us sweet subject matter for our meditations in the day. We should be careful to *lift* up our *hearts* to GOD frequently in devout ejaculations, and ever be studious to keep our *lowly master* before us, whose example, if followed, will conduce in no small degree to our *present* and *eternal* comfort. When the soft hours of rest approach us, we should enter our bosoms and strictly search out the transgressions of the day, that we may *weep* over our folly and obtain *forgiveness* ; so shall we be enabled to compose our minds, and securely infold ourselves in the arms of refreshing slumbers. Without regulations of this nature, we shall be often running into perplexity, and loading our minds with *fresh* contractions of guilt.

BE it our business to remember we are *dy-*
ing creatures, and going to the *judgment seat*
 of JESUS to receive our decisive sentence ;
 —therefore let us watch lest DEATH should
 surprise us into ruin, and our negligence be
 requited by *perpetual* exile from future glory.

Now

Now let me earnestly entreat you not to suffer these reflections to be easily wiped from your remembrance.—Ye have often, perhaps, been impressed with solemn reflections similar to these, but they soon vanished and left you but the worse.—Ye weep—but why? Is it for yourselves or others?—Is it for those whom DEATH has torn from your embraces, and now detains close prisoners in *the place appointed for all living*?—To lament for them is fruitless, since all the extravagance of distress and sorrow can never recall them from “the land of apparitions”—or the bed of loathsome putrefaction!—“Weep for yourselves” and not for us, would be the language of those decaying bodies, were they suffered to retread the stage of action, or exercise the once loquacious member, now for ever mute. Then testify your love for them, by a due compliance to their advice—indulge no *useless* sorrow to employ those hours sleep refuses to attend you in; rather seize such favorable seasons for far other purposes. Let the solemn vibrations of the *midnight* bell enforce the truth each stroke declares—“Thy kingdom is departing from thee!”

THE end of all things is at hand! May this *truth* sink deep into our hearts—That so when
the

the *world* allures, *Satan* tempts, and our *hearts* are prone to yield, we may speedily recollect our *approaching end* and dismiss the bait *untasted* and *despised*! May every day of our lives be attended with suitable expressions of gratitude for additional favors, and while our *days* are *increasing*, may we consider our *lives* are *diminishing*, and that our *end is at hand*! May we, *whenever* the hour comes, *be ready*, and *die the death of the righteous*; to this end may GOD ever assist us with HIS *grace*; so shall we witness a good confession at the last, to the comfort of surviving sojourners, whose hearts will rejoice in GOD, while we attend the call of the *angelic convoy* to the celestial world, where all is joy and *everlasting* PEACE.

F I N I S.

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PEACE.

F I N I S

